



**THE
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DIVINITY SCHOOL
REVIEW**

Winter 1976

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About Preaching

This issue of the *Review* is about preaching. In recent years, preaching has been ridiculed, maligned, and dispossessed even by those whose ordination sets them aside for the ministry of word. The prologue of the gospel of John calls the chief actor in all things "The Word," and the great reformers viewed this whole area as absolutely central in the life of the church. Yet preaching has seemed empty and futile for many persons in ministry, and they have hoped for more significant activities such as counseling, education, community action, small groups, etc. These are vital ministries, but they have not yet displaced preaching as an integral part of the life of the Church.

There are many evidences of the enduring power and mystery of preaching and some suggestions that we are now in a renaissance of interest and purpose relative to true preaching. The articles that follow will encourage all those who have anything at all to do with "the word preached and heard" to lift high their expectations for the place of the pulpit in the Christian Church.

Carlyle Marney, who has helped many preachers to discover a dialogical learning—teaching—preaching—being in the community of faith, describes vividly and helpfully "The Fundaments of Competent Ministry." He suggests that the word "competent" could be changed to "pastoral" or "preaching" (The Fundaments of Preaching Ministry).

Some new resources for Biblical preaching are related to the ecumenical lectionary—(COCU 1974). Vatican Council II declared that at mass "the treasures of the Bible should be opened up more lavishly so that richer fare might be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word." The development of a new Roman Catholic lectionary beginning in 1970 followed. American Protestants, some of them consulted in the preparation of said lectionary, considered the Roman Catholic Lessons as they revised their own books of worship. There is sufficient unity in the resulting lectionaries of several traditions to allow an inter-denominational publication of aids for interpreting the Lessons of the Church Year. This series of twenty-five books entitled *Proclamation* is reviewed by Lloyd Bailey, and the matter of lectionary preaching is addressed.

The thrust of these articles suggest that homiletics is *not* simply a branch of rhetoric but in fact belongs to the total theological enterprise. The Greek word, *homileein*, means to be in company with. Homiletics at its best and truest is informed and inspired by the interaction of all the disciplines of theological education and is then fleshed out in real life situations in relationships with God and his people.

—John Bergland

Fundaments of Competent Ministry

by CARLYLE MARNEY
Visiting Professor of Preaching

When Karl Menninger was putting together his latest book, he asked in a letter if I thought him presumptuous to address a book to clergy. "I want to tell them," he wrote, "that we psychiatrists do not know all the answers and it is no good trying to imitate us with or without fees." Indeed, coming from such a man, there was no presumption, and considerable grace emerges when he did go on to say, "*I do not think they (clergy) realize what power they have at their command to do the very things they want to do. . . .*"

Not since Charles Dickens was giving us such a hard time of it in *Pickwick Papers* have Christian ministers appeared in sorrier plight. *Vis-à-vis* our culture and its institutions of value who hears a truly helpful voice? If our society threshes about like a huge boa, its head in the noose of a trap, if little creatures are crushed in its writhings and if there's none to quiet the beast, is it because (as the Wakefield Master put it, c. 1425) "*are we all hand-tamed by these gentry?*"

I still think not. But it is a presumptuous affair in any culture when one sets out to speak of, to, or for God—much less before so "knowing" a populace as ours. We have always had a hard time of it. Augustine complained of his clergy as "a couple of unpretentious sheep dogs." Charlemagne sent for Alcuin to give ignorant preachers something worth hearing to say. Chaucer has a line on "shitey shepherds and their shitey sheep." Jonathan Swift flailed out at the Scottish Divines as delivering "oracular belches to . . . panting disciples." Yet, that Charles Dickens version of Methodist preachers: *unctuous, mewling, greedy*; across 150 years it stings!

Now educators, physicians, lawyers are, by and large, in as bad a case, except that budgets and fees allow them the dubious advantage of more self-respect (or self-deception!). What seems missing? Are we all "hand-tamed by these gentry"?

Neither education, nor opportunity, nor courage is lacking, really. Rather, most everywhere, we clergy have low self-esteem: hence we lose what we had to say, and the pasture in which to say it! Dr. Menninger tells us that we must not fear to be reproachful.

He asks us to make like Jeremiah, Amos, Micah, and John the Baptist.

Now all of us know that the nerve to be reproachful will never make possible a ministry. A broader base than that negative gift is required—but I answered Dr. Menninger by saying that an inordinately high percentage of the clergy we see at Interpreters' House do not have enough sense of "I," worth, integrity, ego maturity to damn a church-mouse, much less an entire culture. So we start there.

Christianly, we have more to say to, for, with, on account of, and in behalf of Man than from any other stance we could take: *if* we have done our home-work and *if* we have enough ego-strength to say *I*. By home-work I mean that decades-long process of inquiry, hat in hand, begun long years before seminary, continued forever after, addressed to competent psychology, psychiatry, sociology, history, drama, art, daily affairs, interpreted by a growing Biblical memory, contemporary experience, theological acumen, into some kind of understanding of our Christian Advantage: we really do know about *Man*; and, we really have been shown the way to an Ultimate Earth. But where on such a venture does one start?

The noted Jesuit, Gustav Weigel, in public exchange with Paul Tillich, told of an Italian peasant who asked how long it would take to make his son a priest: "It depends, nine years if Benedictine; twelve years if Dominican; but if he wants to be a Jesuit like myself, 'twould take fifteen years!" And the old man replied, "Well, Father, I suspect my son had best be a Jesuit, he *is* a little slow!" So are we all—slow—and no seminary on earth can do in three years or six years or fifteen what it takes to make competent a ministry of the Gospel of God; but—competency for ministry can be grasped at there, the quest can focus itself there, tools and skills can be gotten there, resources for the long haul can be identified there, friends and heroes for the journey, with bread, can come together there. This, for me, is what seminary is about. I have learned to work with certain fundaments always in view.

I

My seminary seemed to aim at making me able "to *tell*." I needed all six years of it and am grateful, but I had to come at my inability "to *hear*" another way. No one can tell until he can hear, and who can hear except as he is heard? This is why the first fundament of any life that is dialogical in form must come to terms with *the shadow side of new-being*. It is an axiom of ministry:

called to bless, *no one can bless any other until he-she can bless his-her own origins*; and, no one can bless who has not also the power to damn. The *I* must be able to say *yes* and *no*, but it must be able to say *yes* to its sources. Hence, somewhere, sometimes, someone must rub my nose in the motives that moved me to seek high calling, else I am never house broken and continue to soil the temple I set out to serve.

This "shadow-side" is all of me that is not visible of or to me. Neither good nor bad, it is just *there* with unorchestrated voices, unnamed terrors, unrecognized dominions all its own. My cellar, darker and danker than I knew, is not really ventilated by my attempts to baptize and/or circumcize the primal powers that push little *Id* to make me serve the self. In religion's holy name I overlay these images with the material of piety as my culture and region afford, but discover I do not really face these primals of *original sin* alone. Some thou, some other, must mid-wife me on this labor. It is a journey to depth, never completed, always dangerous, and the door to my redemption even as it is door to my "private church." To fish out that cistern, label its old skeletons and carcasses of primal powers: infantile lust, rapine, and greed—this *is* humanum.

And, one can drown there, in the very waters of new-birth, unless the *I* begins to see early an *original salvation*: To wit, *from wherever I started I was loved or I would not have been kept!*

"Yea, strangling in your own after-birth, I . . . bade you live . . . tended you like an evergreen. . . .

Ezek. 16:6, 7

There was for any *I* some significant *other*.

From here *I* can begin to make peace: with the culture that spawned me, with the parents who shaped and mis-shaped me; with the institutions that provincialized, distorted, and preserved my values. From here the *I* can go through home again. *I* can accept and bless the stuff God had at his disposal for making me. *I* realize that somewhere on my road, with some other, *I* did become a new creation—lust began to become *love*, rapine became *communion*, hate turned to *concern*, and greed began to rest content. As Otis Rice taught me thirty-five years ago, the *I* is never really shocked now; *I* have been inside. Never really ineligible now, *I* have substitutes to priest those who still threaten me. In Oman's words, I know God has other messengers. I no longer have to bless them all. I am no more the universal mother. My omnipotence bubble has sprung a permanent leak. I have become to myself a

vulnerable biological specimen with infinite potential for personhood and a high calling, but no more. No longer God, I can be Man and can deal with grief just because guilt is no longer impossible to be borne. I can be priest now, for somewhere along the way, in being heard, and loved, I began to learn to hear, and love. Here, I can endure myself as the sinner I am if I wear the clericals of any contemporary regiment of semi-holy men. But *I* need a better perspective.

II

This new perspective is primarily personal, and is, therefore, theological in a proper sense. Dan Zeluff, my colleague at Interpreters' House, works also with a psychiatric firm in Asheville. He claims to have heard no person whose concerns were not theological. The becoming-person-priest is always theologian; personal-theologian and hence theological-person. That is to say, the person is always person before some *thou* and a *Thou*. For the working priest this means not so much dogmatic theology; he may be really less than a systematic theologian—the perspective for persons-in-relation is a relational-theology—that is to say, the *I-in-company* comes at making-hearing persons *through an Instrumental Theology*.

Instrumental theology stays always in the dative case. It is always means of seeing-thinking-interpreting, never end in itself. It knows that God Almighty is nominative case, always subject, but it uses the Name haltingly and with a proper stammer. Its immediate subject is Man, and the theologian's stance is always *fides quarens intellectum*, which means this theology is sometimes even *rational* theology, attempts to be systematic, even properly dogmatic, but is not thereby ever merely *adjectival* theology. This priest-person does not fall into or remain in the traps, fads, extravagances of denominational or regional or national or racial theology. He-she transcends "white, black, Southern, German, Canadian, Baptist, Catholic" as limitations on faith seeking understanding. This believer-obeyer modifies thinking with *gerundives*—verb-forms—of the order and importance of *liberation*—no adjectival limit—it aims for the whole human race—and it is always dative case—instrument or means.

That is to say again, Instrumental Theology stays in its place—even its talk of God is dative case, which means we speak more intimately of a kingdom of God than we speak presumptuously of its King. In this connection I heard Paul Tillich pressed by an

eager hearer. In his last year then, the old man answered out of a mood of reverie—as a young man, “Christian Socialist,” he said, he had known the phrase “Kingdom of God” as some sort of bucket to catch the end of history—but then he came to this country and understood what our nineteenth-century men meant by God’s Kingdom—the big body straightened and he finished:

before zis Idol—mit fear and trembling,
I say ‘Yah.’

And so, in proper dative case theology one does not violate the “penumbra of mystery” with stupid pronunciamientos, and one hears faith’s inquiry pressing him-her toward faith’s active voice, which is the life of obedience to a light, a word we have heard from behind us. As we go, with Calvin and Wesley and John Baillie and a holy company, we may learn that only in *obeying* does one “see” God. This life of theologizing-relating-obeying can only be described as an *ethic*.

III

All of which means that a corollary fundament involves the relational-believing *I* in a way of life that furnishes a Name. The life-style of this *I*-in-relation is an *Identification Ethic*—and here emerges the Christian Advantage: ours is a genuinely nameable and recognizable identity.

Let me try to recapitulate a way of saying this heard most recently from that grand full-orbed *I* that lives as William Stringfellow:

The *I* does not derive its identity from its images of itself as male, or white, or ordained. The *I* does not think of itself in any primary sense as being a gender, race, or religion. The *I* does not know who it is from economic, political, class, or familial connections—although, Stringfellow added, “I am all these.” And, tragically enough, almost every “other” *will* identify the *I* by a combination of these images, but such images are untrustworthy markers. The *I* is both male and female, whiteness is suspect, ordination is too peripheral, education is mostly ignorance, “southern” or “Tennessean” is too local, Democrat is too slippery, pauper is not identity, and twentieth century is too recent. The *I* is older, pushed by eighty thousand generations. So, and from any Christian and ethical point of view, neither sex, race, region, religion, class, politics, economics, nor family identify my *I*; they do not contain or even adequately describe the *I*. These buckets, these tags, these tent-poles are culturally described, family determined, socially im-

posed. They shape the adult experience of the *I*, but as adjectival modifiers only. The NOUN is *Man*; the pronoun is *me*. In the Gospel, the *I* by conversion to Jesus Christ and by growth in grace is set over against all these as false images—partial, deceptive, fragmentary de-humanizers. Conversion to Jesus Christ puts me contrary to all such identity images. In the Gospel, the *I* is Biblical person, and this means a change in Name recognizable through the life-style of the Biblical *I*.

The trouble with any lesser base for ethic seems to lie in a common tendency to read life as made up of discrete *ordnungs* or orders: sex is male *or* female; life is secular *or* holy; family is legal *or* bastardy; value is economic *or* spiritual; custom is revelatory *or* heathen—when lived life is all these at once. The Christian ethic of identification, incarnational ethic, that is, a life-style that is “Christian,” refuses all these orders as definitive or even adequately descriptive if, as, or wherever the person is de-personated by them. Neither sex, nor race, nor age, nor place of origin and servitude, nor political connection, nor class, nor citizenship here, nor property, nor religious affiliation defines the Christian *I*. Rather, the *I* derives its identity, and that of its *thous*, from the highest it knows of its species; the “best-of-breed” is source of identity.

(When a visitor asks me, “What is a quarter-horse?,” I do not show him just any old scrub-pony. I take him up to my high pasture and whistle for Buck—he comes up dancing, ears forward, head and tail up, age resting lightly on him, he is full brother to a very famous stud, gelded by accident in his youth or I wouldn’t have him, but the blood and style and conformation—all there—like his famous brother! He is the best of the breed I know.)

When one asks, “What is it to be truly human?,” one speaks of Jesus who is the Christ; this is our species, this is the identity of the Christian *I*. My *I* as Christian is derived from my kinship to that *thou*, Jesus the Christ. The *I* is defined by, takes its images of itself from, finds its parameters as person in Jesus who is the Christ. This is incarnational and identificational ethic—this is the Christian secret of the *I*.

But there is more. The *I* so identified in Christ Jesus lives this self-recognition, self-consciously, with any other *I* that is in on the secret, and this puts *us* in Church and changes how we live with each other in the life described by various orders of relation, aimed always at the truly, fully human we have seen in Jesus. When lived out, this means Church is like nothing else on earth, for it knows who and whose it is.

But there is more. While this identity-in-common is our Christian secret (Barth), we also know this about all those others out there, *whether they know it or not*, and this is the basic aim of Christian life-style: to live with and for all those others so that they find out who they are, too. And so, the ethic of identification means at least a life lived in community with all the Jesus' in such a way as to call out persons fit for a Kingdom that has come, comes, and is coming. Lehmann's version, and that of many others, is that this is what God Almighty is up to: to make and keep humanity human.

In the life that is Christian and human, sent to call out persons as ends for a Kingdom that is God's, the *I* has reason to need what Jesus recognized: if the *I* is to be "harmless as a dove," *I* will need the "wisdom of a serpent" to be effective, for the "this worldliness of things in general" makes for pretty rough going.

IV

A fundament of effective calling, then, will be to know *the means of a proper sedition*, for much of our work-witness puts us over against principalities and powers. Here, once again, the confessed insights of Stringfellow help me say this is what the Christian *I* sees in *Crucifixion*: the triumph of the principalities wrapped in our cultural images. They won out on Calvary. But there is always more. In *Resurrection* we see the denial of Death's ultimate power; and, at *Pentecost*, we are discovered by the power to stand over against these de-humanizers, and here Christians—wise-as-serpents, under orders to be properly seditious, in the service of all mankind—lay hold on a viable method.

Of course the *I* knows sociology will not save us; it is neither salvation nor even evangelism and witness. But it does disclose to us the means of our proper sedition. Like any other science, sociology represents a *method*. And here those vaunted "orders" come into proper play. They furnish the Christian Community a place to take hold. To wit:

In this culture to be an adult really means to have finished one's ideological tepee. Inside, wrapped in his goods and warmed by his gods, the adult never has to come outside the tepee he has built. The tent of his identity is supported by certain tent-poles, value systems, ideas of worth and propriety he takes from his region and his family. These tent-poles, while of different substance, are always the same in number and size in whatever culture. They are comprised of the structures for living used to describe the life

of any commune, village, city, or family. Lecky used them in his monumental description of late medieval Europe. Sumner makes of them his outline for his study of folk-lore. They are the rubrics used to describe a people by Tacitus and Caesar—and earlier by the Greek historians. To know a people I must know their views of sex, family, race, region, religion, law, class, and always economics, economics.

The point? If Gospel is gospel, it will soon or late put every one of these values under judgment and bless or damn each, on the basis of what its faithful service does to persons.

For the Christian Community there is, we say, a broad sedition to join. It is the revolt against ignorance, lethargy, our self-complacent images, our myth-systems, the patriotism of all mere regionalisms, and involves casting off pious humbug. The work for Gospel-in-society is the education of a now-present adult generation. It does no good to say that the future of any church or people is its youth. This is an evasive and short-sighted lie. The future always has been the now-present adult generation. Here, in the third, fourth, fifth decades, adults settle down with their prejudices in a congenital conservatism that always corrodes our pipes for another long dry-spell unless interrupted. For adults are adults when their ideological tepee is finished, outside of which they aim never to go any more. They never come out, until or unless some visiting fireman in Church mentions American opportunism, or Angola, or Viet Nam, or Communism, or Cuba, or Chile and the CIA, FBI, Watergate intransigencies. There is simply no hope for the real personhood of these people unless some seditionist can bring about a facing of the local myths—and this means the kind of conflict that caused our Lord to counsel the wisdom of a serpent for his followers.

The method? One has to face the myths—perhaps with better myths. For example, gospel will sooner or later face the myth about *property* and the absurd notion that *poverty* is its opposite. (Property and poverty are synonyms. The antonym for each is *Community*.) The myth about *character* we face, too, for most of us think we have had it forever. (We are all refugees from either an Eurasian or African cannibalism generally less than four hundred years apart.) And we face daily the merging of the myths of property and character, recorded on the same tape to give a libretto to the good-life-we-deserve—in spite of the procession of “little boxes, little boxes” we escort to grave side. And always we face the myth of race, racial origins, native worth, and the local myths of *patria*,

one's native land and its regional superiorities. Add on the religious myths, and the sex-difference myths, and the politico-economic myths, and the big lie of all, the myth that I-do-not-have-to-die. Then see and say that there is no way to human maturity except directly through these fabrications designed to protect the self-soul from the realities of suffering and evil against which we are called to revolt, too, lest they smother us and we die.

There is no way to work that does not put us preaching, teaching, living and being in ways that interrupt the myths. This is the method, and it justifies the work of every sociologist and philosopher of culture who has tried to show us. We have to face our fantasies; this is curriculum. This is agenda. And its use is the method a new human-hood uses to come to grips with situations the ignoring of which is sub-human death.

V

I suppose I have listened to a hundred and fifty clergy refugee their way out of the Christian ministry in general and the South or some denomination in particular. I think not many of them "fixed" anything by their departure, although some have raised our general average by leaving. Yet, and somewhat sadly, I do not recall among them any whom I felt to know this last fundament of dialogical ministry: by and large, if not exactly one and all, they did not know *the words of Consolation*. I think no dialogical being-in-the-world is possible apart from knowing some of *the words of Consolation*. I take the name from Martin Luther's *Consolatoriae*, otherwise called *Fourteen on Consolation*, composed for Frederick at a time of his near-dying. And what might these consolations be? They vary and they change some, but mostly they remain the same. However used, apart from some axioms of a proper speaking, the consolations cannot console.

No "teller" may give a word of consolation he has not yet "heard," although indeed the word he has heard may speak to a situation he does not yet know.

Nor is there any consolation in a word I have heard and utter to another unless the other receives it. (Perhaps this is why in Luke 10 our Lord is reported to have instructed his sent-out ones to take back the blessing not received—the implication being that the blesser-self may need the word himself before the journey is over.)

And, once again, there is no consolation to be had from any word of any "teller" who cannot bless his own origins. The Con-

solatoriae come always from one whose cellar voices are no longer shrilling in his ear. And then, even when spoken in competency, the speaker's eye is on the specific hearer—there is no general word—it is always infinitely personal, spoken to a *thou* one knows. Even when the word comes from the self speaking to the self over against another he has heard, the self must receive the self's word, or there is no consoling. This is the inconsolability of Wander-Hope in De Vries' *Blood of the Lamb*, for even hunkered down before that Cross and hearing the fantasied repetition of the "suffer the little children . . .," Wander-Hope could not hear it and still wanders.

Most restrictive over the valid word of consolation is, I think, the awareness that the speaker of the word is always caught in the contradiction, too. This insight lies under Nouwen's gorgeous title, *The Wounded Healer*; it is under the line Stuart Henry gave me from a contemporary play—"in the army of the Lord all are wounded"—it is in Kierkegaard's notion of "*Thoughts Which Wound from Behind*;" it is in Berdyaev's claim that every time a good man suffers he releases redemption to the need surrounding because he suffers unto life, not death. C. G. Jung is recalling material from his own activities about 1904-1909 when he uses the folk-saying, "*only the wounded physician heals*." "The doctor is effective only when he himself is affected." (Memories, Dreams, Reflections.) But earlier still, and most poignantly, is this not the meaning of that word to a crossed thief—*ho die mecum eris*—this very day shalt thou be with me—spoken from the Lord's own Calvary?

All of which is to say this: the Consoler must know soon or late how to distinguish between *healing* and *grace*. The word is invalid until we know that "curing" and "caring" are not the same at all. Flannery O'Connor was already under burden of that dread *Lupas* for which there is no curing when she spoke her word: *Grace is always present, but grace and healing are two different things*. When one knows this, the sufferer can hear Grace even in the grotesque of an actual situation because the grotesque itself is known to be so only over against some certitude of what it would be to be well. So, and finally, the word of Consolation may rest on *certitudio*; it cannot rest on certainty, or it would already have passed the bounds of faith and faith never "knows"—it just bets its life. This means that the dialogically competent veteran of the Way does not have to lie when he speaks the word of grace.

These, then, as I have sought them, are the fundamentals of a contemporary ministry that is dialogical. Or, to use another figure,

these make up the staff for any Christian household. In the measure these are acquired they explain why there is nothing on earth quite like being truly pastor, if indeed one ever is. There is a *shadow-side* at which I am working; there is the interpretation of an *instrumental theology* to make sense of my queries; there is an *ethic of identification* wherein my life-style in community reveals my name and nature; there is a *sociology of sedition* that subverts principalities and powers; and there is that religious dimension in *words of consolation* that say to the other, because the word is already heard by me, that "our highest values are really values, that they do count in the whole pattern of things, that the things for which we have worked are not shallow dreams, that the meaning of the universe includes us." What our hearts long for is answered by someone, and grace exceeds our poor projections of it, with love, in a sphere wherein which I have to do with God, and God has to do with us.

The editor of a psychology journal has recently pressed me for comment on a paper purporting to equate *gestalt therapy* and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Although I have stood hat in hand for over thirty years asking psychology to correct my notions of man, I still could not make this equation. *Psychology*—even that of my own shadow-side—is still a downstairs maid in the human household. True, the kitchen, pantry, laundry, plumbing, heat, and fuse boxes are all downstairs, as are most explosions! *Theology*, no longer queen, or even mistress in the human house, is an upstairs maid who works for order and meaning, and *Ethics* is her bound-partner whose taste and style give the place its character. *Sociology* is outside gardener and can keep the place from the sewers' attrition, while true *Religion* is chief steward who brings grace and communion at table, but all these are in the service of the house-keeper, *Man*, who is agent for the sometimes absentee owner, God-Almighty, who also sometimes, indeed, still comes to table at a Supper.

Together, their service faithfully establishes a competent keeper in the Christian house, and together, I think, they provide the fundamentals of being-in-the-world as a person-in-relation that seminary is set to encourage.

Ten Tests for Preaching

by JOHN BERGLAND
Associate Professor of Homiletics

A stimulating paper discussing the place of preaching in the Judaic-Christian tradition had been read. The hearer's thoughts were focused on the staggering concepts and lofty reaches of that paper. It spoke of the enduring power and mystery of preaching that is "language of the boundaries." It recalled old and new descriptions of preaching: preaching that is "Truth through personality," preaching that "brings to expression the Word of God in real life situations," preaching that is "Word-event," an actual happening in the God-man encounter.

Then a grand old man, who had lived long and well and whose sabbath faithfulness had resulted in a breadth of experience with the "Word, preached and heard," spoke deliberately his questioning response. "Yes, Yes, Yes. All that you say seems very good and perhaps true. Yet I have been a scientist all my life; therefore my question is, 'How do you measure it?'"

His question needs to be addressed. Preaching continues to hold its central place in the life of the church at worship. Preaching is still worthy of a seriousness of purpose on the part of all ministers. Therefore we must ask, "How do you test it?" What criteria may be used to evaluate preaching? What standards will help us to appraise authentic preaching?

Preaching, to be sure, is continually evaluated. You will hear said, "That was a good sermon;" or "Our minister is a good pastor but a poor preacher;" or "That was a good word." By what standards are these evaluations made?

Unfortunately, some of the reasons for saying preaching is good or bad are themselves not very good. For example, the question recently raised, "Who are the five best preachers in America today?" was immediately answered by the questioner himself, who listed the five most popular and best known preachers. That a preacher attracts great crowds is not itself a worthy standard for testing "faithfully good" preaching. "Beware when all speak well of you."

Again, you will hear preaching that is articulate, witty, and entertaining described as good preaching. While it is essential that

preaching be interesting if it is to gain a point of contact with the hearer, sermons that are only entertaining are unworthy of the mark, "true preaching."

Some sermons (at least a few) reflect literary excellence. They are creative, imaginative, and fresh in both content and form. Such sermons skillfully designed for the hearing ear may be delivered with rhetorical mastery and yet fail to be true preaching. Clarity in construction and beauty in delivery will indeed serve to improve almost all of our preaching, but that in itself does not provide a basic test for "true preaching."

Authentic preaching will be responsible to its place in the total Christian community. It belongs not only to the preacher, but also to the congregation. It will reflect the memory and expectation of the people of God in times past and in times present. It will be rooted in the Word and standing in the world. True preaching will step onto the bridge between the mundane and the majestic, between mud and stars, and, recognizing the awesome mystery of the preached Word, will dare to speak for God.

The quality of mystery referred to by Jesus regarding new birth also applies to preaching: "The wind blows where it will, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes or wither it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Because the vital center of preaching, that interaction between Word and congregation, is fraught with mystery, it cannot be wholly captured and defined by any measurement. Therefore, we will do well to recognize the limitations of our tests. Yet, to help clarify the intention of preachers who come seriously to the task of preaching the Word, may we set some targets and suggest these ten tests for preaching.

1. Is the sermon faithful to the Biblical witness?

Some sermons that begin with a lesson, employ Biblical language, and quote verses fail to recognize God in the Old Testament and God in Christ in the New Testament as the chief actor. Or they employ the Biblical words and neglect the meanings. Such sermons are not faithfully Biblical. Again, there are sermons without any Biblical text, that use little Biblical language, and yet remain centered upon the memories and expectations of the people of God which are central to the witness of scriptures. They, even though neglecting the Bible as common language of the church, may be Biblically faithful.

2. *Has the scripture passage been allowed to speak its own message?*

Because of the limitations of time and circumstances related to preaching, not every facet of a text and not every possible interpretation may be addressed. A preacher is necessarily selective. It is essential, therefore, that the first step in preparing a sermon involves listening to the text. Let it speak its own witness to the issue it chooses to address. Do not assume that you have clearer understanding of life and truth. Resist imposing your ideas upon the text. It is not your responsibility as a preacher to defend the text or to make it relevant. Let it speak! Listen! Respond! Be on guard that your selective response does not finally duck the central thrust of the text.

3. *Does the sermon address some ultimate and urgent need in real life?*

True preaching will not be offered only to satisfy the need for a sermon or simply to retell old truths. It will address some contemporary issue and need. This need may be part of the fabric of the human situation in all generations. Such an issue should be critically important and real. Ask of the sermon: "What concern or problem is addressed?" "Is it ultimately important?" "Can it be expressed in concrete realism?" Preaching that is authentic will not seem "long ago and far away," but will wrestle with vital issues relevant to the first century and to the twentieth century.

4. *Is the sermon thoughtful and informed?*

Irrational and intellectually dishonest preaching is not true preaching. We dare not avoid the tests of reason. Many sermons ignoring the discipline of an intellectual pursuit and questioning of facts offer sweeping generalities that claim too much. No preacher will know everything that savants know about any given subject, but the preacher's thought will be clearly reasonable and sermon information will be correct. The counsel at this point is: be accurate, but not pedantic; be rational, yet not only rational.

5. *Does the sermon encourage the spontaneous flight of mood and feeling?*

In every important conversation and encounter there is feeling. True preaching will not flee from emotion, but will recognize this heat and power that may weld the Word into our very persons. While true religious experience does not depend upon how one

“feels” about it, there is yet inherent in it both joy and tears. True preaching is not only emotional, but it does give attention to the counsel of the Apostle Paul: “Weep with those who weep. Rejoice with those who rejoice.” Ask of the sermon, “Is it emotional?” Hopefully, it will be. Then ask again, “Is it only emotional?”

6. *Does the preacher offer anything of himself or herself? Is the preacher present?*

All of us have had the experience of hearing someone talk, but knowing all the time that the speaker is not really involved in what is spoken. This may be with good reason. To be authentically present in communication is to offer your own witness, and witness involves risk. True preaching dares to say what the preacher has seen and heard and felt and known. Such witness involves risk. It is safer, but poorer, to offer preaching that only reports the hearsay and common talk of others. True preaching will be confession or arrogance or both.

7. *Does the sermon faithfully present both judgment and grace?*

Preaching often tends to be almost wholly negative and judgmental. It begins with a description of the ills of society and proceeds to catalogue the sins of the people. This scolding, carping criticism of the world and all that is in it (including the church) has little to do with authentic good news. When sermons only moralize, only criticize, only sound the “ain’t it awful” complaints of a preacher, only suggest what “ought to be” and “ought not to be,” there will be no authentic saving word.

Moreover, when a willy-nilly disregard for all value and moral claim allows the preacher to offer easily and cheaply the gift of grace, true preaching will be denied. Test the message. Does it offer both the claim and the promise? Both judgment and mercy?

8. *Is the preaching forthright, candid and bold?*

There is an authority and confidence in true preaching that does not have us saying “perhaps,” “maybe,” “it seems,” etc. There is no uncertain sound about true preaching. The preaching of the gospel is a proclamation with clarity and candor. Of course, we all want to be right before we state our position. (We are never absolutely right.) Therefore, we take counsel before we speak. Let us take counsel chiefly with our beliefs, slowly with our doubts, and let timidity be replaced by boldness. Carlyle Marney counsels

preachers, "You're not asked to be right, you're asked to be forth-right."

9. *Is the preached word caring, responsive and faithfully dialogical?*

The first responsibility of a preacher is to listen: to listen to the witness of Scripture and tradition, and to listen to what is being said and shouted and moaned and cried and sighed and jeered in all the experiences of the men and women one is called to serve. After listening, the preacher may dare to speak, but faces the requirement that the preaching be dialogical. This is not to suggest a little talk back after the sermons. It means being part of a lived-out conversation. The preacher does not simply hand out answers and make pronouncements from "out there" or "up there," but, knowing that God is in our midst, strives for the meeting of meaning between Word and world. True preaching does not swing the authoritative club to bring the congregation into submission. The prophetic word, when spoken, is offered through tears and with a caring that is for "you," to "you," and received by "you." Yes, bold preaching may be dialogical.

10. *Is the sermon for all the people?*

Many sermons are so parochial and near-sighted that they fail to have the breadth of witness that addresses every man and every woman. They speak only to the interests and needs of the local and immediate situation. Preaching that tends to be a private affair is not authentic preaching. Recognizing that "God so loved the world" and that the great commission is to "go into all the world," let true preaching find its point of contact in a local and concrete situation and yet remain fully conscious of God's children everywhere.

Let it be noted in conclusion that the three tests that have been noted most frequently by lay persons who list their criteria for evaluating preaching are: (1) Does the preacher offer anything of himself or herself? (This usually is expressed, "Is the preacher sincere? Does the preacher really believe what is being said?") (2) "Is it faithful to the Scriptures?" (3) Is it related to some real life need or concern? These three criteria are not new (nor are the others), but they do have continuing merit in setting the standards for true preaching.

In the 'On Deck Circle'

by PAUL MICKEY

Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology

Pulpit baseball—is that what preaching has come to these days? No, not in my judgment. I use this image to help explore the theological dynamics of the pastor's sermon preparation by lifting up two factors associated with preaching but sometimes forgotten. First is the presumptuous but necessary assumption that preaching—and no more or less than pastoring—requires lots of ego. One has to have ego, a sense of self-identity and strength, a kind of latent cockiness that as the preacher one can go up against the Word of God on some kind of "playing field" created by people and the Scriptures and not always strike out. Sometimes a home run is belted; other times a base on balls is the best hope; at times a scratch single, a bunt, a passed ball can all be welcomed. Underlying the actual activity of going to the "plate" to bat as preacher is the self-confidence that the pastor belongs in this league—and I hope it is the big leagues!

A second factor is the lectionary. This is represented by the pitcher. Waiting for Sunday and inspiration in the "on deck circle," the preacher knows inevitably that *Sunday will come*, that he or she as preacher will be facing directly the Biblical text. Accompanying the sense of inevitability of taking a turn at bat on Sunday is the competitive force of the good preacher who enjoys matching wits with the lectionary! From previous experience one can predict the basic pattern, style, and approach of certain pitchers (specific liturgical seasons), even as the sense of the awaited and unexpected greet every preacher each time at bat. Sermon preparation is the fallow time of ferment, the season of inevitable and joyful anticipation in the "on deck circle."

I. *Pathos*

The preacher begins in the *pathos* of his or her own personal, parish, cultural, and social experience. The extent to which the preacher's immediate experience (personal, parish, social, institutional) is circumscribed in the moment of readiness and anticipation is directly related to one's ego strength. If preparing for

the sermon is a time of fear, anxiety, drudgery, avoidance, plagiarizing, copying, it becomes an emotional "down" and a waste of time leading to a disintegrating ego in the "on deck circle." How calm and confident is the preacher despite taped toes, broken fingers, protruding pregnancy, or high humidity?

II. *Ethos*

Sermon preparation is a time of joyful relaxation in the world and in the Word. It is the process of getting it together again, to be affirmed in the faith, to be confronted in the parish, to be persuasive in the *ethos* of the culture. Like the menstrual cycle, the seven-day cycle of preaching is a cosmic reminder of the unity of the preacher and nature in God's providence. Some fear this and some celebrate it.

The "opposition" or adversary in sermon preparation is not initially the people or the parish. It is the Word of God, selectively and classically preserved and presented to "deliver up" the most difficult, obtuse, ridiculous Scriptural odd-ball pitches one could imagine. What comes down the lectionary "shoot" toward the preacher may be a fast ball, knuckler, curve, drop, spit, or bean ball. Few texts end up doing what they appear to be at first; there is breaking stuff, junk stuff, blinding speed stuff, and slow, change-of-pace stuff. All of it is a part of the scandal of the gospel. Most disarming and embarrassing are the tight-breaking pitches which slam in upon our strength turned into weakness by the Scriptures, tradition, and reason. Too late! One cannot step out or bribe the umpire to call "foul" or "ball." We have to see it through. The preacher has to swing and live with the consequences. The preacher may do well or may, as the saying goes, "learn from that experience."

The Biblical witness and history, indeed the history of the various communions, have developed an informal and formal lectionary for preaching. This lectionary is, in a profound sense, not merely a big league pitcher tempting our ego to reach out; it is the objective referent for preaching. That is, the *givenness* of the lectionary text speaks from the *ethos* of the ages and present circumstance. It prevents preaching from lapsing into a rampant and destructive subjectivism. Without an organizing principle and perspective for presenting texts we are left to the "devices and desires of our own hearts." Any self-respecting batter likes to square off and hit away at the easy stuff. Without a lectionary we

would deliver up to ourselves the sure bet; the lectionary helps objectify God's Word—both *presenting* it in its total range of Godly scandals and *protecting* us from a batting practice subjectivity that the whole preaching exercise might be under our control.

A second objectifying function rests with the lectionary being on "the mound." It becomes an objective reference for the *ethos* of the present circumstances. It prevents us from responding immediately, subjectively, and directly to what is most apparent in the culture of one's parish or preaching situation. That is, the lectionary prevents us from slipping to the *pathos* subjectivity of our own ego—regardless of how strong; and we are prevented from slipping into the *ethos* subjectivity of our cultural and parish problems. Without question, the noise from the stands, the afternoon sun or glare of stadium lights, the teasing and cajoling of the bench jockey or drunken fan or needling player on the field can distract from proper preparation and draw the preacher into an over-identification, often negative, with contextual matters before the liturgical season even begins.

When confronted by a difficult situation in the church, community, or even in the pastor's life, the temptation is to allow what is most immediate to become the total focus. Slavery to the lectionary is a way of denying or driving away the reality of the immediate situation and may draw the pastor prematurely toward poor expository preaching wherein only Biblical themes and stories receive attention and illumination. The other side of the threat of immediacy is that of situational over-identification and a swift slip into topical preaching. Whatever is most immediate and apparent is allowed to overwhelm one's perspective, shoving its way onto center stage, insidiously demanding all the attention. Suddenly the claims of life have no depth or character. There is but a scant thread of the immediate topic to relate all of life to God's word. One celebrates the loss or lack of ego strength by wallowing in immediacy. What is needed is perspective, character, depth, and distance to aid in realistic solutions. It may be that, when teammates and opponents alike expect one to bunt or swing for the fence, a little strategy—utilizing the unexpected—would be in order. Effective preaching strategy combines *pathos*, *ethos*, and *Logos*. A theological perspective which understands and utilizes pathos and ethos is necessary. One begins with one's ego strength and personal wits (pathos) and moves to include accurate and energetic perceptions of the cultural milieu, including the

traditional cultural wisdom of the church found in the lectionary (ethos).

III. *Logos*

All this brings one to the act of stepping into the batter's box to engage in the Word-event called preaching. *Logos*, the Word, the Biblical witness, now enters the picture. The text for the day begins to bear witness as it become incarnate in the witness of the present (pathos and ethos). Without being incarnate, through the preacher in the hurts and joys of the parishioners, the Biblical narrative is no more than comparative story and ancient literature. The Word of God is no magic "logos." It is *Logos* because it is incarnate; for incarnation to occur, the intention and desire of God to reveal his gracious love for us, *and* the context, the situation, must exist, plus the awareness of the setting which can receive God's love. The text is not the *Logos*, *the* beginning point. There are two points, God's intention and the human situation. The pastor, ordained to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, is acknowledged by the church and God's people everywhere to have that authority and power to bring together the *logos* (witness) of the text and the *logos* (witness) of the setting. This bringing together of the *logos* of situation *and* text in the sermon prepares the people and the pastor for the Word-event that creates *Logos*—the Word of God proclaimed, perceived, and lived. The potential of the text and the situation becoming *Logos* is realized in the act of preaching.

So the arrogance and humility of preaching. One could bow too quickly before the text, allowing the canon to bully, intimidate, and govern reason, experience, and the richness of the stories, dreams, and surprises of the Scriptures. One could bow too quickly before the most vivid, captivating, apocalyptic imagery floating through the "medium" of the mass media of TV, newspapers, gossip, magazines, and one's own fantasies. To preach requires ego, but not to exploit, shame, or manipulate. Exploitation and shaming are the sure signs of an insecure, immature, and rigid preacher. The great need and opportunity laid upon today's preacher is to reach the burden of the human heart of those people who are immediate and present in the congregation. Words about banner headlines of the twentieth century or the first century are not the *Logos*. The *Logos* is God becoming incarnate in heavy hearts and hopeful lives of persons sharing in the discerning and energetic life of the preacher who, in Jesus Christ, is creating a Word-event.

Lectionary Preaching

Some Reflections on Method, Plus a Review of
PROCLAMATION: Aids for Interpreting the Lessons
of the Church Year.

by LLOYD BAILEY

Associate Professor of Old Testament

There is no one completely satisfactory way of choosing the text (or texts) which will (must?), in some fashion, inform or find expression in a given sermon. The problem is no less acute for so-called "situational" preaching than it is for the more traditional "expository" type. In either case, the pitfalls which lie close at hand include the possibility that (1) personal opinion about a contemporary "situation" will subsequently be "blessed with a text," i.e., the preacher will come to the text with a mind already made up and thus can no longer be challenged by it; (2) the pastor may talk only indirectly about the "gospel" in general, a "gospel" that is sometimes amazingly similar to contemporary cultural values, rather than deal with the concrete implications of a specific passage from the Tradition; (3) sermons will be based upon a few favorite (comfortable?) books or themes, rather than upon the total range of material which our spiritual ancestors have found valuable and handed down to us.

Let the preacher here pause and ask, "When was the last time that I preached from the Old Testament?" Or even better: "When was the last time that I preached from Leviticus?" Have I the freedom, the right, to make premature and subjective judgments about which scripture material is "relevant" or "unpreachable"? Is not every story, every unit of material, available to us because, amidst some crisis in the history of our community, it gave and sustained identity as no other story could? And hence it was treasured, repeated, and preserved for us, having been tried and tested by our spiritual ancestors. Dare I, therefore, regard Leviticus as irrelevant?! (Let those who think so read the commentary on this book in *The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible*, or in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, or in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement* [soon to appear], all written by Jacob Milgrom.) And is it not possible that the passage which disagrees with what I think is precisely the one which I most need

to hear? Is it the function of Scripture to support my preconceived notions, or is it, in part, to challenge them? And if it is the latter, how do I best insure encountering and dealing with such texts?

One attempt to avoid such pitfalls is to preach with the aid of a lectionary (assigned readings [OT text, epistle, and gospel] for the Sundays and festivals of the Church Year, usually arranged in a three-year cycle). At least the following advantages may be listed.

a. The selected texts range over the vast majority of both Testaments (e.g., the new COCU Lectionary omits only eight of the OT books: Judges, Ruth, Ezra, Esther, Psalms, Obadiah, Nahum, and Haggai).

b. The preacher is forced to begin with the text, to derive from it the formative idea, rather than to search for a pretext from Scripture after the sermon is well along.

c. Texts which may challenge the preacher and the congregation can no longer be avoided. No longer is there the freedom to offer a "selected" gospel.

d. One may concentrate upon the individual lections or upon their interrelatedness, and thus stress both the diversity and the unity of Scripture. (It is only relatively recently that the former aspect has begun to be stressed and appreciated; see Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theory in Crisis*, Part II.)

e. Disciplined obedience to the lections for the day may, upon occasion, prevent the preacher from indulging in personal battles with the congregation. Recent personal frustrations and defeats can not thus become the occasion for browbeating the people next Sunday with conveniently selected texts!

On the other hand, it must be stressed that the lectionary also presents problems for the preacher and that it must not be used uncritically. Among the problems are the following.

1. A given lection may not be in accordance with proper unit-division (i.e., it may disregard the boundaries of the ancient thought-unit). This is true in the majority of cases, and the following is a random selection of illustrations (based upon the *Proclamation* series).

The proper unit Isaiah 11:1-9 is expanded to include vs. 10, in order that it match Romans 15:4-13 where it is quoted (see A:Advent-Christmas, p. 7).

Hosea 5:15-6:2 interrupts the unit and gives a totally false impression of what the prophet is saying (A:Lent, p. 40).

The omission of vss. 5-7 from the reading Hosea 11:1-4, 8-9 changes the import of the message from threat to forgiveness (A: Pentecost 3, p. 36).

Vss. 4-9 (dealing with the future prosperity of Jerusalem) are omitted from the reading Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11. Since vs. 9b blesses Judah (the Jews), it apparently was not fitting for inclusion with the NT lections. The exegete fortunately calls attention to the need to restore these verses (B:Advent-Christmas, p. 14).

The reading Zechariah 9:9-12 should properly continue through vs. 17. As a consequence of the exclusion, the portrait of the messiah as warrior is avoided, in support of the NT reading (Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday). Surely this exclusion borders upon dishonesty and perversion of Scripture (B:Holy Week, p. 1).

By stopping with Isaiah 6:1-8, rather than continuing to the end of the chapter, emphasis is shifted from the purpose of Isaiah's call (unpleasant to hear then and now!) to his response. The exegete calls attention to this improper omission (C:Epiphany, p. 34).

Omissions in the reading Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 remove the concrete social and economic guidelines in favor of a more general emphasis upon love (see A:Pentecost 3, p. 24).

Luke 4:14-30 is broken into two lessons (between vss. 21 and 22), creating a truncated initial reading whose purpose is to present Jesus as the fulfillment of the OT prophet Isaiah. Rather, the entire unit was meant to illustrate the use to which Jesus put the OT reading, a use which Christians in the present might find extremely uncomfortable (see James Sanders' sermon, "What Happened at Nazareth?" available on *Thesis Cassettes*). To make matters worse, the homiletician in the *Proclamation* series, speaking of the second reading, urges us to proclaim God's sovereignty, which "shows us the reliability of our salvation" (C:Epiphany, pp. 20ff.). On the contrary, one could argue that this text challenges those who are most sure that they are chosen and secure!

2. The three lections for a given Sunday often have little or nothing in common—or that which the readings suggest is in common is highly questionable. (For specific examples, see the review section [below], no. 7.)

3. Since the lectionary is, by definition, related to the Church Year, it is almost inevitable that the OT not be heard on its own terms; rather, an external "promise" and "fulfillment" scheme will

be imposed upon it. This can be both a loss and a gain, and is an area where the preacher should proceed with great caution, reflection, and humility. (See the review section, nos. 1-3, 7.)

4. The lectionary is, after all, limited in the range of texts which it utilizes (see above, "a"), primarily because it moves in a three-year cycle. Thus some of the most majestic, challenging, and "preachable" OT texts are not used at all, presumably because they do not conveniently support any of the chosen NT readings. On the other hand, some of the OT texts actually chosen for "matching" purposes are theologically rather insignificant, to say the most!

5. Since the preacher will often feel impelled to address some sudden or pressing problem of the congregation, the assigned lections may often appear irrelevant. There will thus be a temptation, if one is slavishly devoted to the lectionary, to force the text(s) to apply in ways that they in fact do not. It would be preferable at this point to abandon the lections for the day and return to them at a later date.

The *Proclamation* series is projected for 26 volumes of 50-60 pages each, 21 of which have appeared to date. They are designed to help the preacher interpret a three-year cycle of lessons for the Sundays and festivals of the church year. The readings (OT, epistle, and gospel) for each occasion includes those found in the following lectionaries: Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian/UCC/Christian, and Methodist/COCU. When one or more of these differ, as is often the case, that of the Lutheran Church has been chosen for full discussion (and a few of the authors will include brief sections concerning the others).

Each lesson is presented under two headings: (1) "Exegesis" of each of the three texts, and (2) "Homiletical Interpretation," usually an integrated discussion of all the texts, but occasionally and preferably there are separate reflections on each of them.

The contributors are pastors and teachers, with exegesis and interpretation assigned to different persons not of the same tradition. This is occasionally a limitation, since the interpretation does not always follow from the exegesis (and in a rare case a problematic exegesis was wisely ignored by the homiletician). However, it would have been difficult to find a number of persons competent to do both tasks (although that is precisely what the preacher must do on each occasion!). The exegetes, in general, have done

well (but for some limitations, see below). The homiletical results are more mixed, but it must be confessed that this is the more difficult part of the project and one for which there is no commonly agreed upon methodology. Among the better volumes are: Series A: Easter, Holy Week; Series B: Easter, Advent-Christmas.

The material has been written with admirable clarity, and it will be intelligible to most pastors whether they are seminarians or not. Typographical errors are few, including, I presume, the following gem from Series C: Pentecost 2, p. 21, "Blessed are the piece makers."

While the study of this series will, for many pastors, improve the quality of their preaching, there are nonetheless serious limitations. Lamentably, a reliable aid in this crucial area is yet to appear.

1. Perhaps *the most conspicuous failure* of the homileticians (and of the editors of the project) *is the absence*, anywhere in the series, *of a systematic discussion of the problems involved in moving from exegesis to interpretation* (from what the text meant *then* to what it may mean *now*). Nowhere is there even a brief list of the assumptions which an author makes in effecting this transition. (Those who desire some assistance in this regard might consult L. Toombs, "The Problematic of Preaching from the Old Testament," *Interpretation*, XXIII, 1969, pp. 302-314; and D. Hester, "Conversing with the Text: Assumptions and Problems in Interpretation," *Duke Divinity School Review*, Winter, 1975, pp. 34-50.)

Of course, some of an author's assumptions (hermeneutic rules) may be gathered indirectly from the discussion of a given text. Perhaps the most persistent assumption, throughout the entire series, is that the OT reading contains a "promise" which the NT reading "fulfills." (For a negative evaluation of this traditional approach, see *Duke Divinity School Review*, Spring, 1975, pp. 141-144.) This may have the effect of preventing the OT from being heard on its own terms.

This is most evident in Series C: Epiphany, p. 4, discussing Isaiah 60:1-6. The text presents the faith of the post-exilic community that, recent delays and historical reverses to the contrary, God will yet keep his promise and Israel will be a blessing to others: "Nations shall come to your light." To treat the text with integrity (i.e., to listen to it) would be (1) to be amazed at Israel's persistent faith; (2) to note other instances, forming a pattern of such faith; (3) to remind the congregation of its heritage ("This is *our* story.");

(4) to encourage the congregation to continue or rekindle such faith amidst the problems of the present. But the homiletician sweeps all of this aside as irrelevant: "This passage can be related to the Christian congregation only in terms of its NT fulfillment. Otherwise it remains a concrete promise made only to historical Jerusalem in the distant past." Several responses may be made to this refusal to listen to the material which the believing community calls "Scripture": (1) There was no NT fulfillment of it. (2) It raises a perspective that is self-defeating: many "promises" in the NT were also made to historical situations that are, to us, the distant past, and thus they presumably also are equally invalid for the contemporary Church! (3) That the passage *can* be related to the Christian congregation apart from an alleged NT fulfillment is demonstrated above.

The same homiletician (Elizabeth Achtemeier) deals with Isaiah 42:1-7 (*ibid.*, p. 10), which proposes that Israel in exile may yet be Yahweh's servant who will establish God's justice in the world. Instead of reminding the Church that she is a continuation of ancient Israel whose faith and goals are her own (as well as those of the Synagogue), the homiletician *begins* with the assertion that "the gospel writers understand that Jesus finally fulfills Deutero-Isaiah's promise of the servant." If this is the only Word (or non-word) that the OT can have for the Church, then perhaps Marcion has triumphed after all. Is it necessary to destroy the OT in order to make it appear relevant?

2. Related to the previous criticism is a series of *unnecessary (if not unfounded) criticisms of the OT and of Judaism*. E.g., B: Lent, p. 31, describes the OT as the story of the people's failure to keep their covenant. It is just possible, on the contrary, that the material was preserved as the story of *God's graciousness*, a graciousness extended as much to an undeserving Church as to an undeserving ancient Israel.

Ibid., pp. 46f., remarks: "People . . . came to see the law as something over against them." But one may ask: Who are these "people"? Statistically, what percentage of the Jewish people did so? What is the source of information for this statement? Surely not the vast corpus of rabbinic literature, which rejoices in the "law" and in obedience to it! Is St. Paul to become the paradigm for all of Judaism? Surely it is time that such uninformed generalizations cease. It is not even proper to refer to the OT, or any part thereof, as "law" (on which see the article "Torah" to appear

in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* Supplementary Volume).

B:Epiphany, p. 50, characterizes Judaism as "legalism," but that is a basic misunderstanding (see the remarks in the previous paragraph).

Ibid., p. 55, speaks of those, presumably Jews, "whose hearts are veiled with the old law," a remark based upon Paul's complete perversion of the text in Exodus 34.

C:Pentecost 2, p. 43, goes out of its way to mention that "some early Jewish texts even speak of God's joy over the death of the godless," a joy not unknown to Christians as the book of Revelation reveals.

In contrast to this attitude, widely attested in the series, I must mention the informed and sensitive remarks in A:Holy Week, by Krister Stendahl.

3. *Even the exegetes, rather than explaining the meaning of the OT text, will sometimes begin by contrasting the text with the teaching of the NT.* By any standard, this is a complete perversion of the term "exegesis," since such comparisons do not "bring out" the meaning of the OT text for its own time! E.g.,

C:Easter, pp. 1ff., deals with Exod. 15:1-11 (an expression of joy because of God's deliverance of his people from an oppressive political system, the consequence of His pledge to be with His people [chap. 3]). All of this is largely ignored by the exegete, who quotes from Corinthians about the similarity of this event to Christian baptism.

A:Pentecost 3, p. 25, discusses Lev. 19:1-2, 15-18, which proposes an innovative imitation of God's holiness, an imitation to be expressed through concrete acts from which the resident foreigner is not exempt. Yet the exegete cannot desist from negative comparison with Christianity.

4. *Little or no attention is paid to crucial historical background.* E.g.,

C:Pentecost 2, pp. 46f., discusses Amos 8:4-7. What has informed Amos' prophetic conscience? What is his relationship to those who make explicit mention of the covenant at Sinai? Has he been influenced by Wisdom materials?

C:Epiphany, pp. 34f., discusses Isaiah 6:1-8, which contains the imagery of Yahweh as king. Would it not be relevant to hear about the death of Uzziah, the recent dynastic change in Israel just to the north, and the new and threatening monarch in Assyria, all of

which is in contrast to the king par-excellence who continues to rule the world and is the source of Isaiah's call?

C:Lent, pp. 20ff., discusses Jeremiah 26:8-15, where the prophet is on trial for his life. Can the mentality of his accusers be appreciated or even understood apart from knowledge of the Davidic Covenant, about which the exegete tells us nothing?

5. *The larger context of one of the readings may be ignored by the exegete.* E.g.,

A:Advent-Christmas, pp. 7ff., dealing with Isaiah 11:1-10, makes no mention of the material which immediately precedes, i. e., of 10:28-34, which deals with the approach of Sennacherib in 701 B.C. The arrangement of the material suggests that the "shoot from the stump of Jesse" is a figure in the immediate future, if not a prince then living, who will restore the judged and repentent community. Only after a tree has been cut down can a sprout come up from its roots! This would change the entire shape of how the material can be used in connection with the NT or the liturgical year. And yet, says the exegete, "The question . . . (of) the date and authorship . . . has no relation to the interpretation."

A:Lent, pp. 20f., where Genesis 12:1-8 is not set against the background of chapters 1-11, a serious omission, as all readers of G. von Rad's *Genesis* will understand.

6. *The authors make factual statements which may be questioned or are in error:*

A:Advent-Christmas, p. 25: Does *parthenos* mean "virgin" in the Septuagint at Isaiah 7:14? Or has a later meaning been read back into the Septuagint? (See the article "Virgin" to appear in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*.)

B:Advent-Christmas, p. 8: "There were no words for 'return' or 'coming again'" in Jesus' mother tongue. On the contrary, I would presume that language to be Aramaic, and that the verb *tûb* would suffice very nicely.

B:Lent, p. 21: "Jewish" is used anachronistically.

B:Lent, p. 42: Jeremiah declares the covenant "null and void."

B:Easter, p. 9: Daniel proposes a "general" resurrection.

B:Epiphany, p. 1: The author confuses an emendation of Isaiah 60:4b with the present Masoretic text.

B:Holy Week, p. 1: Riding a donkey is *not* a sign of humility, contrary to the author's statement! It was, throughout the Ancient Near East, a declaration of nobility or royalty.

C:Pentecost 2, p. 43: Salvation as a present reality is said to have been "invented by Jesus."

C:Pentecost 3, p. 31: "*Salvation*, read in Hebrew (sic!), means saving your skin . . . Read in Greek it translates, 'receiving the life of your savior-god.'" While it is possibly true in some passages in the NT that "salvation" has this contextual implication, there is no basis for implying (as the author has done) that this is an etymological meaning. Furthermore, this self-serving slander of the OT and of Judaism is without foundation.

C:Easter, p. 5: Is it true that the NT teaches "immortality" as opposed to resurrection?

C:Pentecost 3, p. 51: Does the name of Isaiah's son (*Shear-yashubh*) mean "A remnant shall return"? Since the verb *shûb* more usually means "to repent," and in view of the prophetic idea of divine discipline, is not "(Only) a remnant can repent" a more likely possibility?

A:Lent, pp. 20f.: Can one, without comment, accept the translation "be blessed" (vs. "pray to be blessed") in Genesis 12:3? Here, it seems to me, the crucial problem of exegesis has been ignored (or unperceived, since the exegete is a NT scholar).

Related questionable statements include: "The biblical word which it is our duty to preach is one whose meaning has been revealed to us by the Spirit residing in the church, not the one that we reconstruct through historical research" (A:Pentecost 3, p. 7). This, it seems to me, sweeps aside the entire exegetical procedure upon which the *Proclamation* series depends.

The authors sometimes indulge in trivial word-plays: "Deceit at work makes a prey of you. Deity at work to make a prayer of you" [sic!] (C:Pentecost 2, p. 4); "God says 'Gesundheit' . . . Man says 'Apartheid'" (*ibid.*, p. 20); "The Christian lives as . . . corn among thorns" (*ibid.*, p. 50).

Somewhat rare is the kind of needless polemic represented by the remark, "woolly-headed liberals" (C:Pentecost 3, p. 25).

7. While the authors properly are sensitive to the possible inter-relationship between OT text, epistle, and gospel which the lectionary assumes, some of them go too far in trying to establish a connection. The search for a common denominator which will link ineptly matched readings means that the central thrust of one or more of them must be ignored. This is a sad state of affairs, more the fault of the traditional lectionaries than of the authors themselves, since it deprives the Church of that central Word which

the text intends and substitutes for it words based upon incidentals in the text. E.g.,

A:Advent-Christmas, pp. 11f.: the author becomes so desperate for a uniting theme that he abandons the Masoretic text of Isaiah 11:2 and turns to the Septuagint, through which a strained connection is possible!

B:Lent, p. 32: The OT lesson (Exod. 20:1-17) contains the ten commandments, those concrete responses which the believing community agreed to make because of gratitude for what God had already done (the deliverance from Egypt). The NT lesson (John 2:13-22) concerns the cleansing of the temple, which the exegete sees as a messianic claim and a renunciation of the temple cult. Obviously, these two texts have little in common, but the ingenuity of the homiletician is equal to the task: "(Jesus') coming has meant the replacement of the temple cult *which represented the old covenant*" (i.e., Exod. 20; emphasis mine). "So interpreted, we can see the three readings for the day blending together." Apparently, it has been necessary to denounce the OT reading in order to defend the lectionary!

The entirety of C:Pentecost 2 may be criticized at this point. Little attention is paid to the central thrust of any of the individual texts. Rather, a possible minor idea common to each becomes the center of the homiletical discussion. E.g., Genesis 18 deals with the problem of divine justice; Colossians 2 presents a Christological thesis; and Luke 11 contains various observations about prayer. "A theme for the day," according to the homiletician, is "prayer is possible." In actuality, this is not the main point of any of the readings, and a sermon based upon this "theme" would not have its origin in the intent of the biblical texts but in the ingenuity of the preacher! And this is an ingenuity which honors the lectionary above the Scriptures.

Sometimes the search for elements in common leads to the suggestion that multiple sermons would be possible. The problem here is that one is abandoning the search for *the* central idea of each text or the central idea they have in common. E.g.,

A:Advent-Christmas, pp. 1ff., deals with Isaiah 2:1-5 (the hope for a time of universal peace), Romans 13:11-14 (the impending *parousia*), and Matthew 24:37-44 (the need for vigilance). The epistle and gospel are rather well matched, but the OT text is only marginally related. In any case, the following sermon topics are proposed: on the price of peace; "on time" as the Bible speaks of it; and on the "meaning of wakefulness and watchfulness."

C:Pentecost 1, pp. 23ff., proposes three sermons from the OT reading alone (I Kings 17:17-24): on Elijah's "life and work;" on "the relationship between affliction and sin;" and on the role of a prophet. It is difficult to see the second of these as a concern of the text, although the connection is made in it.

It is only in relatively few cases that an author will stress that each text for the day has an integrity of its own and could be used as a basis for sermons (e.g., A:Epiphany, p. 38; C:Pentecost 1, p. 39; C:Lent, pp. 15, 34).

A few authors face the issue squarely and confess that the lectionary has erred:

C:Pentecost 1, p. 39: "The preacher seeking an immediately apparent unifying theme in these pericopes may be disappointed."

C:Epiphany, p. 19: "There is almost no way in which they can all legitimately be joined."

C:Lent, p. 25: "The relationship of the Second Lesson . . . as is so often the case, is not immediate . . ."

A:Pentecost 3, p. 20: "It is very difficult if not impossible to draw together this Sunday's three readings . . ."

A:Pentecost 2, p. 16: "The Romans pericope seems not to have any affinity with the others at all."

Among the more reliable and helpful issues in the series are: A:Easter (by John Snow and Victor Furnish); A:Holy Week (by Krister Stendahl); B:Advent-Christmas (by Thor Hall and James Price); and B:Easter (by Charles Rice and Louis Martyn).

Ordination and the Theology of the Cross

(I Corinthians 1:18-31)

by DAVID C. STEINMETZ

Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine

I

The Jews expected a Messiah. Jesus Christ was a stumbling-block because, though he was expected, he proved to be not the kind of Messiah who was expected. The Jews took history seriously. They faced up squarely to the problem of history. And the problem of history is this: Why is the good so often impotent in the struggle against the evil forces in the world? They believed, however, that God was sovereign over history. And so they demanded signs. That is to say, they demanded a decisive and miraculous demonstration of the power of God in history over the forces of evil. They demanded a vindication of the righteous—among whom, of course, they numbered themselves.

This attitude of the ancient Jews is reflected in the Psalms. C. S. Lewis characterized the attitude of the writers of the Psalms in this way: "The ancient Jews, like ourselves, think of God's judgment in terms of an earthly court of justice. The difference is that the Christian pictures the case to be tried as a criminal case with himself in the dock; the Jew pictures it as a civil case with himself as the plaintiff. The one hopes for acquittal, or rather for pardon; the other hopes for a resounding triumph with heavy damages. Hence he prays 'judge my quarrel,' or 'avenge my cause.' . . . The 'just' judge, then, is primarily he who rights a wrong in a civil case. He would, no doubt, also try a criminal case justly, but that is hardly ever what the Psalmists are thinking of. Christians cry to God for mercy instead of justice; *they* cried to God for justice instead of injustice."

This was why the message of the cross was a stumbling-block to the Jews. They wanted a demonstration of the power of God. But the cross showed the weakness of God in the world. They

wanted a vindication of the righteous. They were answered by the cross, on which was executed an innocent victim of human injustice. They wanted a triumph of God over evil. But the cross symbolized the apparent defeat of God by evil. "For the Jews demand signs . . . but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews. . . ."

II

The Greeks did not expect a Messiah. There is nothing so foolish as an answer to an unasked question. The message of the cross was foolishness to the Greeks because the Greeks had no questions for which the cross was an answer. The Greeks, unlike the Jews, did not take history and its problems seriously.

The Greeks did not believe that one could solve the problems of injustice in history. There are no solutions for any of the problems in history. History is like nature. Just as autumn follows summer and winter follows autumn, just as harvest follows seedtime and seedtime precedes harvest, so too human life is a recurrent cycle of birth and death. Every problem repeats itself, given enough time. The philosopher Seneca said: "There is nothing permanent except change." It is futile, said the Greeks to the Jews, to look for some meaning in history. There is no meaning in history. History is not moving toward a goal in which the good will triumph decisively over the evil forces in the world. History is not moving toward any goal at all.

The Greeks wanted to escape from this world, in which nothing is finally resolved and in which everything is subject to change and decay, to an eternal realm where nothing changes, grows old, decays—a realm of eternal and unchanging truth. We believe that the world we can see and touch—the world of 4:15 planes to Atlanta, of campaign buttons and January white sales, of Exxon gasoline and income taxes—is the real world, the world that counts. No so the Greeks. The real world is the world of eternal ideas. And there is something to be said for this point of view. Paint a fence post white; in five years—or less—you must paint it again. Visit your hometown after an absence of several years and see if you can find your way about. Meet a friend you knew in high school on a business trip and notice how he has aged. Can a world that changes this much be real? The Greeks thought not. And so the Greeks sought wisdom, an eternal and unchanging truth. What is good and beautiful and true does not change from day to day or year to year.

The Greeks did not need Christ to put them in touch with this eternal realm, because there is a Christ in every man—a spark of divinity—human reason! Human reason does not need to be deceived by the appearances of this world. Earth satisfies animals, but it cannot satisfy us. There is a longing in man for what is eternal and unchanging. William Watson put it this way:

In this house with starry dome,
 Floored with gemlike plains and seas,
 Shall I never feel at home,
 Never wholly be at ease?

Never, answered the Greeks. We weren't meant to feel at home in this world. Our spirits belong to eternity. "For Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified . . . folly to Gentiles. . . ."

III

The cross is a sign that God does not hesitate to work in a manner which is contrary to human expectation. The Jews wanted a vindication of the righteous against the forces of evil in this world. But God, in a display of evident weakness, allowed the Messiah to be crucified by those same forces of evil. The Greeks wanted to avoid this world and its problems altogether, and find their fulfillment in a timeless and unchanging world of ideas. But God, for reasons which are opaque and inexplicable to the Greek mind, poured out his love and mercy on this changing, aging and dying world.

We cannot bind God to our expectations of how he ought to act. God always reveals himself to be something more, something better, something other than we imagined him to be. The prodigal son thought his father would be an avenger. But he turned out, after all, to be a father. The rich young ruler thought that Jesus would concur with him in his own estimation of himself as a pious man. And was shocked when Jesus told him to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. God takes the unexpected turn, the unlooked-for tack. He does not try to conform to our expectations. He has the freedom to be what he is. He sets the terms on which he reveals himself. He defines the basis on which we come to know him. He is not obliged to revise his course of activity to meet our expectations. Rather we are obliged to revise our expectations in the light of what he has shown himself to be.

The cross reveals the wisdom of God. That is, of course, not instantly apparent. The evidence one sees speaks eloquently to the

contrary. The Jews and the Greeks mentioned by Paul were certainly wrong to reject Jesus as the Christ, as Lord and Savior, but one can hardly fault their interpretation of the facts. That an omnipotent God should allow the Messiah to be the victim of a cruel injustice—that certainly is a stumbling block for faith; that an eternal God should suffer the indignities of the cross—one can only call that foolish. Weakness and folly seem appropriate enough descriptions of the meaning of the cross. But the “foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” Hidden underneath the folly of the cross is the wisdom of God. God, who suffers apparent defeat in the cross, uses that defeat as the instrument to save those who believe. Beneath the “no” of the cross, one finds a deeply hidden “yes.”

IV

The task to which we are called as ministers of the Church is the proclamation of the folly of the cross, of the weakness in which God's strength is revealed. There was a symposium two years ago in the *United Church Herald* on the meaning of ordination. One of the contributors, a student from a seminary in the East, described ordination as setting out on a quest. The minister did not have all the answers to the questions which his people would raise, but together with his people, as a co-learner, he would seek for answers to the meaning of life.

Humility is usually a virtue, but it is possible for humility to be misplaced. G. K. Chesterton posited a mythical people too humble to believe the multiplication table. It is humility for a minister to disavow that he has all the answers, but it is not humility to claim that he has no answers at all. It is either unbelievable stupidity or faithlessness. The minister has received answers to the great questions of life which he did not cook up and which he has a responsibility to transmit. The minister is not the transmitter of his own private beliefs and dreams. He is the bearer of the Church's proclamation of the crucified Lord, however much his communication of that gospel bears his own individual stamp. The Church lives from the message of the cross. It does not live from the private religious ideas of its ministers.

It is not easy to preach the message of the cross. In our day, as in St. Paul's, that message runs contrary to human expectations. The Jews wanted a God to vindicate the pious; the Greeks, a God who instructed the wise. People want a God who doesn't trouble them too much, who grants a maximum of blessings and makes a

minimum of demands; a God who dwells at the periphery of life, near enough to hear us when we cry to him, but far enough away not to be a source of embarrassment to us. But God does not try to meet our requirements, does not try to fit our expectations. He cancels out our demand on him and lays his own demand on us.

Sometimes his demands are very painful to us. Augustine, when he first began to feel the need of God, prayed for light on the dark problems of his life. God granted him light. But the first thing it showed was his own unchastity and incontinence. He prayed for the truth—even if it hurt. And it did!

Nevertheless, if we accept his terms, if we let him be the God he wants to be and not the God we wrongly imagined him to be, we will find opening up before us the way of wisdom and peace. The cross looked like the frustration of God's plan, the decisive evidence of his utter powerlessness in the world. But God uses the cross as the instrument of his mercy to defeat sin and evil in an unexpected way.

It seems like folly when the Church commissions you to preach this message of the cross. But if you have the courage to proclaim it—always a stumbling block to Jews and sheer folly to Gentiles—you will prove the power of God to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. You will find that his strength—as he said it would—is made perfect in your weakness, and you will discover for yourself that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Some New Books Related to Preaching

Colin Morris, *The Word and the Words* (Abingdon, 1975, \$3.95 pb).

This book is a defense of classical preaching—proclamation of the Word through the sermon as it has been understood in Christian history. Some of the material was offered in the Frank S. Hickman Lectures on Ministry at Duke in the autumn of 1974.

G. Gerald Harrop, *Elijah Speaks Today* (Abingdon, 1975, \$4.95 pb).

An Old Testament professor demonstrates how technical Bible study may imaginatively relate to history, drama, and preaching to bridge the gap between the academic classroom and the pew.

John Killinger, editor, *The 11 O'Clock News and Other Experimental Sermons* (Abingdon, 1975, \$6.95).

A collection of sermons and worship experiences that are examples of spontaneity and creative freedom. Many of the sermons use media such as cassettes, films, slides, music, etc.

George E. Sweazey, *Preaching the Good News* (Prentice-Hall, 1976).

A practical book that addresses question like, "How to prepare a sermon," "Can style be improved?", "Where to get sermon material," "How do lay members relate to preaching and sermon preparation?", and much more.

David H. C. Read, *Sent from God* (Abingdon, 1974, \$3.95).

The Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale for the year 1973. Dr. Read presents his case for preaching today, emphasizing the interaction of preacher and hearer. An individual sent from God to live, communicate, and empathize with people and then mount the pulpit.

Clement W. Welsh, *Preaching in a New Key* (United Church Press, 1974).

These studies in the psychology of thinking and listening do not address the questions of how or what to preach, but they offer a theory of preaching that takes seriously a person as a center where messages from a universe are received.

O. C. Edwards, Jr., *The Living Active Word* (Seabury, 1975).

A suggested useable approach to authentic Biblical preaching in an effort to restore the Bible to its rightful place in homilies.

Clyde E. Fant, *Preaching for Today* (Harper and Row, 1975).

A Religious Book Club selection that addresses the theme of "Incarnational preaching" and builds on the theology of preaching with attention to the preacher as a person of faith.

Proclamation: Aids for Interpreting the Church Year (24 volumes, eight for each lectionary year of a three-year cycle), (Fortress Press, 1973-75, \$1.95 each).

Authors from varieties of traditions and experience offer exegetical and homiletical interpretations of the pericopes for each Sunday and for special days in the Church Year.

Reginald H. Fuller, *Preaching the New Lectionary* (Liturgical Press, 1974, \$7).

These interpretations of the lessons for each Sunday were first published over a three-year period in the journal, *Worship*.

A Lectionary (Consultation on Church Union, 228 Alexander Street, Princeton, N. J. 08540, 1-10 copies 25¢ each, 11-1000 copies 20¢ each).

An ecumenical lectionary related to the recent lectionaries of several traditions.

J. B.

Focus On Faculty

EDWIN R. GARRISON, Visiting Consultant for Field Education and Continuing Education; Retired Bishop, Dakotas Area, United Methodist Church

Since I have been invited to share some points of my ministry in which I have found a strong sense of fulfillment, I shall limit my "autobiographical statement" to a factual listing and then add some more personal observations.

Born in Clinton County, Indiana, 1897, eldest son of Elliot and Susie (Enright) Garrison.

DePauw University, A.B. 1921, D.D. 1944; Drew Theological Seminary, B.D. 1925; graduate studies at Drew and Columbia Universities; LL.D. Dakota Wesleyan University 1964.

Married Edith Heritage, Jan. 20, 1922 (deceased July 14, 1971); daughters: Helen Carolyn (Mrs. Lewis Kauffmann), Marion Ann (Mrs. J. H. LoPrete); married Marion Frances Thompson, Mar. 10, 1973.

Ordained Deacon in North Indiana Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, 1925.

Pastorates: Vaux Hall, N. J. (student), 1922-28; Sheridan, Indiana, 1928-32; St. Paul's, Elkhart, Indiana, 1932-39; Bluffton, Indiana, 1939-42; Wayne Street, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, 1947-50.

The congregations which did most for my soul were those where I felt most needed. My student appointment was a prime example. The community ranged from slum to middle class. Many were immigrants; education and income levels were low. Community life was tumultuous. Some people from the old-world culture jeered at the church. Others, with touching simplicity, leaned heavily on us. More than fifty years later we still hear from some of these people now scattered to the four corners of the nation.

Then there was the congregation served during the "Great Depression" of the early 1930's. We never received our estimated salary for the good reason that everyone was flat broke. Spiritual communication was often at a deep level. Lasting friendships grew out of this tribulation.

District Superintendent, Wabash District, 1942-47; Board of Ministry, North Indiana Conference, 1948-60; Administrative Assistant to Bishop, Indiana Area, 1950-60.

Administratively, the great adventure was to leave a major congregation in one's middle life to become administrative assistant and alter ego to the resident bishop, Richard C. Raines. Many bishops had experimented with various kinds of help, including men fresh from seminary who drove the car or did clerical work. But no bishop had blocked out large areas of responsibility and given full authority to execute it. The Area covered the State of Indiana and contained three substantial Annual Conferences. This was before the day of the Conference Council on Ministries with program directors. Would pastors and people, and especially District Superintendents, accept such leadership? Would they really believe that the new official would never discuss appointments with the bishop or any other persons? There was no Methodist precedent or experience in the United States by which one could judge the possibility. I was troubled by the memory that the search committee, early in its work, had delineated the proper kind of candidate as "a person with his future behind him"! But the job worked out because there was mutual trust.

Elected Bishop, July 8, 1960, North Central Jurisdiction; assigned to Dakotas Area 1960-68; retired by General Conference, 1968: assigned by Council of Bishops to make study of the Methodist Parish System, published in 1971 as The Parish for the New Age.

Election to the Episcopacy touched off a gala celebration by friends and a deluge of congratulatory messages. But the experience left me with an indelible impression akin to fear. I was awestruck at the thought of the trust which the election implied. Even in retirement the feeling is sometimes overwhelming. One becomes a member of the Council of Bishops with participation in the oversight of a world-wide church and at the same time is assigned to a specific Episcopal Area—in my case the Dakotas Area, where less than sixty-five thousand members are scattered over a geographic space a little larger than the combined states of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. Fortunately for me, there are no better people in America than those to be found on those great plains, and their spiritual support and encouragement was a heaven-sent gift.

Member, General Conference, The Methodist Church, 1944, 1948, 1960; North Central Jurisdictional Conference, 1944-48-52-56-60; General Board of Education, 1944-52; Coordinating Council, 1952-64 (Chairman 1960-64); Board of Missions, National Division, 1960-64, Joint Committee on Missionary Personnel; Committee on Interjurisdictional Relations, 1964-68; Committee on Study of Ministry, 1964-68.

Work with the Coordinating Council was very rewarding. The agency was created by the General Conference of 1952 with a broad spectrum of responsibility. It was to recommend the number and timing of "Special Days" in the church program; survey agency periodicals and make recommendations concerning possible consolidation; study the general agencies with a view to elimination of overlapping work; and conduct special studies referred to it by the General Conference.

The Council created the Board of Christian Social Concerns (now Church and Society) by combining and reorganizing the Boards of Temperance, World Peace, and Social and Economic Relations. It substantially cut the overlapping of periodicals. It produced a study of the Episcopacy which resulted in a lower compulsory retirement age, provided for simultaneous sessions of the several Jurisdictional Conferences to make possible the exchange of bishops (in case that state of grace ever arrives), and recommended changed procedures for the work of the Council of Bishops, creating a new climate in that body.

The unforgettable experience was the comradeship which developed among those 36 persons from the (then) six Jurisdictions and the overseas church. We worked long hours over complicated documents, usually around tables arranged in a hollow square, with an intimacy in which we recognized one another's voices without looking for a face or an up-lifted hand. We knew we had to face the whole church with our work. Nothing could be shoddy or careless. We had no passengers aboard for the ride; all were crew. In 12 years, as I remember, the General Conference rejected just one of our reports.

Board of Directors, Indiana Council of Churches, 1953-60; President, Board of Directors, Indiana School of Religion, 1956-60; Honorary Life Member, United Methodist Rural Life Fellowship; Member, founding Board of Directors, Indiana Civil Liberties Union, 1954-60; Chairman, South Dakota Ad-

visory Committee, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1964-68; Vice-President, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 1966-76; Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity; Scottish Rite Mason.

Home Address: 346 East Methodist Drive, Franklin, Indiana 46131.

As I try retirement, once again, my catalogue of fulfilling experiences must, preeminently, include these four school years at Duke Divinity School. I regard this period as one of the crowning privileges of my professional life. Dean Langford and all faculty members have been most generous as they have given me opportunities for fellowship with them. I could have felt threatened by their encyclopedic knowledge and expertise in so many fields but, without exception, they have graciously made Marion and me a part of the community. The commitment of students inspires us to greater devotion. Our wildest imaginings could not have foretold the joy and privilege of this stimulating company in the magnificent setting of Duke University. We shall be grateful for these blessings until the end of our lives.

Book Reviews

When Cancer Comes. Clarence McConkey. Westminster. 1974. 140 pp. \$2.95.

"Cancer Family" is an image which draws together those who have been touched by cancer—physically, emotionally, professionally, and religiously; all are part of the Cancer Family. This holistic perspective controls the eight chapters of the book.

The chapters, "Prevention and Treatment" and "We Respond to Cancer—Shock, Fear, Hope" are good. Chapters on "family" dynamics provide good general background information but no effort to analyze the data is mounted. Three chapters consider the religious question. These are less helpful, if not misleading. For openers McConkey says, "I believe in faith healing" (p. 117) but gives his own definition: "it is my belief that religious faith helps in maintaining healthful patterns of life . . ." (p. 118). Such crass pragmatism reduces faith to sheer operationalism. Not so.

When Cancer Comes fails to achieve its "family" potential. McConkey's wife died of cancer and he had a bout with it. As I read I kept forgetting about the pathos, richness of experience and strength which surely belongs to McConkey but never made it into print. How sad. Nonetheless, a good, educational resource for pastors and laity.

—Paul A. Mickey

Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity? Tetsunao Yamamori and Charles R. Taber, editors. William Carey Library. 1975. 262 pp. \$5.95.

It is somewhat ironical that *missiology* ("the field of research and theory") comes to the fore, especially among Evangelicals and Roman Catholics, at the very time when *mission* ("the applied activity of that theory in the world") seems to be in decline. It is

also somewhat surprising to find these missiologists avidly advocating the latest scientific techniques, from computerized statistics to scientific field research. "Every missionary," says one of them twice in this book, "should have anthropological training and understand the worldview of the people to whom he takes the gospel" (179 & 192).

At the William S. Carter Symposium on Church Growth, held at Milligan College, Tennessee, in April of 1974, "four highly qualified missiologists in different disciplines and with different areas of experience examined the perennial problem (accommodation versus syncretism) in the effective and sound communication of the gospel" (10). Coordinator of the conference and co-editor of the published papers was Tetsunao Yamamori (Duke Ph.D. 1970). The panel in a carefully structured format consisted of David McGavran and Alan Tippett from the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, Peter Beyerhaus of the Institute for Missions and Ecumenical Theology at Tübingen, and J. C. Hoekendijk of Union Theological Seminary, New York.

The fact that these men have served extensively—and perceptively—in various parts of the world (India, the Fiji Islands, South Africa, and Indonesia) makes their illustrations vivid as well as relevant, their insights valid as well as stimulating. The question assigned to them was, in Tippett's words, "how to communicate the essential *supra-cultural* core of the gospel to new believers in other cultures without having it contaminated by the non-Christian forms with which it must be communicated and shared" (14). It should surprise no one that the conclusions reached—after wanderings through anthropological, sociological, psychological, and practical jungles—offered no concrete guidelines but

simply reflected the fundamental theological presuppositions of the participants.

McGavran (contra Barth and Kraemer) concedes that "all cultures and religions have in them apprehensions of the divine, understandings of reality, beliefs concerning gods and man, which when properly used help non-Christians understand the gospel" (162). But he is convinced that "the faith . . . is to be known strictly from the Bible" (37), that "it is easy to distinguish matters in which there is obviously no ultimate truth . . . from those in which commands of God are involved and ultimate truth is concerned" (167). Beyerhaus, viewing "salvation history as a warfare between the kingdoms of God and Satan," goes on to warn that neglect of this principle "is the greatest menace in the present encounter between ecumenical Christianity and non-Christian religions" (139); "not the magical threat of the human enemy is our real danger, but the righteous wrath of God" (91).

Long before reaching the summary statements, this reader was asking (with Hoekendijk, 218), "How can you be so secure?" To quote the Union professor further: "Motivations for joining the minority Christian community are, always, not for us to decide on. Humble agnosticism is one of the key words of our current missiological vocabulary" (75). McGavran is sure that "the essential core of the Christian religion is broadly and briefly definable" (41): the Bible and the Triune God (though the latter is admittedly "not clearly set forth" in Scriptures). But in his final paper he resorts to "the pragmatic test" (242), the establishment of an on-going church, to determine whether a questionable practice is "legitimate accommodation" or "illegitimate syncretism" (Yamamori, 11). Tippet (114) divides the human problem into "the encounter between the *religion-man* and the *apostolic-man*"—although Beyerhaus graciously concludes that there is *not* "a proper representative

of the religion-man approach in our midst" (203).

Beyond "our midst," however, Beyerhaus' sweeping generalizations fall harshly: "This is, indeed, what is going on within the ecumenical movement today. All confessional traditions are openly or secretly reinterpreted in the light of Marxist humanism" (202) The whole ecumenical concept of history is a monistic one. No distinguishing line is drawn between world history and church history any more . . ." (214). But one may even agree with Beyerhaus that "the Judeo-Christian religion is, as far as its convictions are concerned, the most intolerant of all religions" (120), yet differ with his missiological consequences. Hoekendijk, on the other hand, quotes approvingly Max Warren's plea "to sit (*sessio*, not *possessio*) where people sit (Ezek. 3:5) and, without labels, let God happen" (151).

Apart from theological and missiological differences, however, one may have difficulty with the terminology. "Christopaganism" may be scientific, professional jargon for "syncretism," but it is more confusing to the average reader—and by the end of the symposium the speakers have almost completely dropped it. "Dynamic equivalence" is preferable to "approximate equivalence" and "formal cultural transformation" to "faith distortion," but the dividing lines are very fuzzy. "Exclusive comprehensive *possessio*" may be God's purpose, but it smacks dangerously of cultural and ideological imperialism when applied to mission policies. Despite a footnote apology, "Euricans" and "Latfricans" (for inhabitants of various regions of the world) sound more like Martians than fellow-members of the Christian community.

In short, the Carter Symposium on Church Growth sets up more dichotomies and disturbing confrontations than it resolves. But, in this reviewer's opinion, that is the purpose, the principal value, of any dialogue—including the "accommodation-syncretism axis."

—Creighton Lacy



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Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas

by W. D. DAVIES

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of New Testament Studies*

The Editor has asked me to comment on the international group of scholars who will assemble for the annual meeting of the Society of New Testament Studies at Duke University, August 16-20, 1976.

To understand the emergence and significance of SNTS it is necessary to recall factors which impinged upon the study of the New Testament since World War I. That war is still referred to in Britain and, I believe, on the continent of Europe generally as *The War*; even World War II did not impress itself as deeply on the European mind. The reason is simple. World War I was extraordinarily bloody. The immense loss of life it involved has been claimed even to have altered the genetic balance or reservoir of European society. And the wounds it inflicted invaded scholarship. When at last peace came, even New Testament scholars found it difficult to bury the hatchet. British students of my generation often imbibed the national prejudices. For example, in many, if not most, grammar schools far more French was taught than German; in many grammar schools no German was taught. On the other hand, on the dedicatory page of his *Das Matthäusevangelium* of 1927 Erich Klostermann could quote Eduard Reuss: "Wir reden deutsch, heisst ja nicht bloss, das wir unsere Muttersprache nicht abschwören wollen, sondern es heisst, das wir in unserer ganzen Art und Sitte, in unserem Glauben, Wollen und Tun deutsche Kraft und Treue, deutschen Ernst und Gemeingeist bewahren wollen." For many years after World I a few British New Testament scholars visited Germany, but it was by no means assumed that it was necessary to study there. C. H. Dodd found that he had to *advise* even R. H. Lightfoot to do so. Few German scholars studied in Britain, and French scholars also indulged in national isolationism.

Although most leading scholars escaped these consequences, some unfortunate results were predictable—national provincialism and international poverty in New Testament scholarship. Very gradually this came to be recognized. New Testament scholars began to combat scholarly isolationism and, just before the outbreak of World War II, SNTS came to birth, largely for this very purpose. The initiative for it came from a Dutch scholar, Professor J. de Zwaan of Leiden. At the Faith and Order Conference at Edinburgh in 1937, he suggested the formation of a society for New Testament scholars. The response was immediate and warm. The Very Rev. G. S. Duncan of St. Andrews was asked to invite the interest and support of New Testament specialists. The letter he directed to them on March 8, 1938, reads as follows:

During the Faith and Order Conference at Edinburgh in August, a small informal group met together to consider the possible formation of a New Testament Society. The moving spirit was J. de Zwaan, Leiden. The others were C. H. Dodd; H. L. Goudge; T. W. Manson; H. G. Wood and G. H. Boobyer of Woodbrooke; W. Manson, Edinburgh; E. P. Dickie and myself from St. Andrews; H. Clavier, Montpellier; E. G. Gulin, Helsingfors; H. L. MacNeill of Hamilton, Ontario. It was strongly felt that such a Society was desirable; and various opinions were mooted regarding the form it ought to take. . . . Prof. de Zwaan has also in mind the issue of a new International Quarterly for N.T. Study. . . . As time was lacking for a more detailed discussion, it was suggested at Edinburgh that an attempt should be made to get a few interested people to meet together in England, say, in September, 1938. . . . I write now to inform you of the proposal, and to solicit your cooperation. . . .

The proposed conference was held at Carey Hall, Selly Oak College, Birmingham, on September 14-16, 1938. Professor J. M. Creed of Cambridge was elected Chairman of the Conference and Dr. G. H. Boobyer as Secretary. At this time the possibility that the Society should publish an international journal was discussed, especially under the urging of de Zwaan. At the fourth session of the Conference, Professor C. H. Dodd proposed "that we do form ourselves into a New Testament Society having for its object the furtherance of our New Testament studies." A provisional committee was set up to build the new organization. The members of it were: J. M. Creed, J. de Zwaan, T. W. Manson, Gerhard Kittel, W. F. Howard, and G. H. Boobyer. This provisional committee chose the name of the Society—a Latin name being preferred in keeping with its international character—and drew up a draft constitution and made plans for a General Meeting to be held at the College of the Ascension, Selly Oak, Birmingham, in September 20-22, 1939. Alas, World

War II intervened, and it was not until March 26, 1947, that the first General Meeting was held, at Christ Church, Oxford. Professor T. W. Manson, who had become Chairman of the provisional committee on the death of J. M. Creed, handed over the leadership to de Zwaan, who, in recognition of his initiative, was made the first President of the Society. He gave his presidential address, and papers were read by Anton Fridrichsen, William Manson, and A. E. J. Rawlinson. All their addresses are still very vivid in my memory. The first five General Meetings were held in Oxford, the sixth at Bern. Most meetings continued to be held in Britain, but then it became policy to meet at intervals in a Continental center.

The membership has steadily grown so that at present it stands at around 700, about half of whom are from this country—a striking and significant indication of the role now played by American scholarship. As will have appeared, from the first SNTS has been deliberately international, and among its greatest achievements has been the fostering of a new openness to all traditions of scholarship and of a mutual respect and friendship between New Testament scholars in all countries. It has helped to break down the national walls of partition and, thereby, added to the width, the depth, and the quality of New Testament scholarship. In 1972—in a year in which it had been hoped that SNTS would come to Duke University—the Society for the first time came to this continent, in connection with the World Congress at Los Angeles, organized by Professor J. M. Robinson (although the SNTS meetings were held separately at Claremont). The General Meeting at our University will be the second in the U.S.A. It is particularly felicitous that it should come on this year of our own 50th Anniversary and of the nation's Bicentennial celebration.

But the General Meetings—devoted to the reading of papers and seminars—are not the only activity of the Society. From the very first, as we saw, de Zwaan had urged the necessity for creating an international periodical of New Testament studies. The General Meeting in Cambridge in September, 1953, decided to proceed with such a periodical. Under the editorship of Professor Matthew Black, who had already served as Treasurer of the Society, it came into being, as a quarterly, under the title *New Testament Studies*. The first issue was published in September, 1954. Before this date the Society had published three Bulletins of Proceedings, for 1950, 1951, and 1952, published by the Oxonian Press, Oxford. The papers read at the first General Meeting held on the continent at

Bern in 1952 were published in a separate brochure, *Man in God's Design* (by C. H. Dodd, P. I. Bratsiotis, R. Bultmann, and H. Clavier, printed by Imprimeries Reunies, 9 rue Pasteur, Valence, France).

The aim of the journal is that of the Society itself: "the furtherance of New Testament studies." Such an aim is simply stated, but students of this Divinity School will know its complexity and comprehensiveness. It takes in the language and text, the background and content—historical and theological—of the New Testament. The journal has necessarily, therefore, been technical—many numbers have been exclusively so—and appropriate articles, in French and German as well as English, have regularly appeared. The Editor of *New Testament Studies* has maintained from the beginning the strictest textual, philological, historical, and literary critical standards. In the fifties and in the sixties the pressure was sometimes considerable, under the impact of the theological concentration of the days of the so-called Biblical Theology, to neglect those standards. But this was withstood, and *New Testament Studies* has consistently remained true to its fundamental charter of furthering New Testament studies in all their critical dimensions.

The Editor of *New Testament Studies*, although naturally concerned to give a certain priority to papers actually communicated at General Meetings, also cast a caring eye over the work of all members who desired to publish in the journal. This care was to lead to the inauguration of a series of *Monographs* under his editorship. The series was designed to further the publication of technical, scholarly works by members of the Society, which, because of their necessarily limited appeal, might otherwise never appear. The first volume in the series, published in 1965, was by Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament*. Thirty volumes, many by American scholars, have so far appeared. The present writer serves as assistant to the Editor in funnelling the works of Americans to the series. Both the journal *New Testament Studies* and the *Monograph Series* are internationally recognized for the excellence of their achievement. This is in large part due, it must be stated, to the dedicated guidance, learning, meticulousness, and wisdom of Matthew Black, who has also been fortunate, not only in the help of many colleagues, but particularly in the understanding cooperation of the Cambridge University Press, which has published the journal and the monographs. The same tradition is now being continued by the present Secretary, Professor R. S. Barbour.

Many readers of this *Review* may well ask what relevance all this strictly scholarly activity has for those immersed in the daily care of the churches. The answer is not simple, but it is not hard to give. In this comment I have emphasized the "scientific" character and purpose of SNTS. But in the very name of the Society stands the New Testament. It is, therefore, of necessity concerned with the foundation document of the Christian Faith under the authority of which all those who have been and are connected with this Divinity School stand. It is imperative to emphasize that the men who founded SNTS were not only governed by strictly scientific interests. They were also moved by devotion to the Faith that created the New Testament and is, in turn, sustained by it. I can testify to this from personal acquaintance with many of them. They were not indifferent to the strictly theological currents and religious needs of their time. J. de Zwaan, in the first Presidential Address read to the Society, wrote as follows:

For us, it is our desperate privilege to stand in a world which no longer believes in the 'isms' of approved authorities or philosophies. Our world has passed through so much that it has reached the courage of despair. It is ready for a dive into the uttermost scepticism, a scepticism not of reasoning, not born from undigested thought, but a more fundamental scepticism, a scepticism of experience. Total experience, experience drawing its vitality from sub-conscious reactions, is the reaction of the whole of man to his experience as a whole. That is a great and indeed awe-inspiring experience. There is only one thing comparable to it. That one thing is faith, faith as we meet it in the New Testament. *Faith, not verbal, traditional or intellectual faith, but faith as it is set forth in the New Testament is the only weapon by which the perils of this situation can be overcome. I presume that it is the will of God that we, students of the New Testament, should by our professional studies and labours promote that better faith, directly and indirectly, in whatever way we can.* That should be our one purpose. We should inspire . . . by our vision of the tremendous importance of New Testament revelation, by the perfect loyalty, cleanness and openness of our methods and our whole mind, by the humility of our theorising and the stern rejection of any kind of insincerity. It is a joy to live on the threshold of a renaissance of real theological thinking.

I have italicized words which unmistakably set forth what was and is probably the deeper motivation of most if not all members of SNTS. I cannot presume to enlarge upon this here. Within the limits available, one can only state that for us who are called to proclaim the Faith it is only by using the rigors of scientific criticism that we can stand four-square to the cold winds that now blow, and command any respect. Critical work such as goes on in SNTS, *New Testament Studies*, and the *Monograph Series* is not an irrele-

vant or optional luxury of scholars, but is the laboratory where the primary documents of the Faith are examined in such a way as to make possible honest exegesis and interpretation and proclamation. The laboratory may sometimes seem remote from the ministry but, in the end, feeds it. The theological problems created by the critical study of the Bible are real; to pretend that the questions posed by the Canon—its character and authority—are simple and negligible is impossible. It is these very problems and questions, with which every minister, and indeed every Christian, has to wrestle, that ultimately concern SNTS. For ministers as for the members of the Society an unexamined faith is not worth having.

But this is not all. The very examination of the New Testament is liberating and illuminating and feeds the soul—not cheaply, not easily, but with toil, sweat, and often tears. In these scholar and minister need not be separated and are called upon to share.

The Rise and Fall of the Bible in Recent American Theology

by ROBERT T. OSBORN
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Once upon a time, during World War I, Karl Barth and his colleagues were driven as a last resort by the exigencies of the day to look to the Bible for their theological existence. Their search was rewarded, for they thought to have discovered in the Bible a witness to the "strange new world" of God and a new call to genuine "theological existence today." The resultant "neo-orthodoxy" was a theology for which the Bible was essential, its only necessary and sufficient cause. It was the "theology of the word of God."

Significantly, the new theology was born of extremity. When Barth made his discovery, he was a parish pastor whose inherited theology was failing. It was failing to speak to the concrete needs of the working people of his parish who suffered an economic oppression that was pushing them to the margins of their society, and it was also failing to answer to the roar of the guns across the border which threatened to drive the whole world to its extremity. Theological existence in this oppressing and oppressed world seemed impossible, except for the rediscovered witness of the Bible to the eschatological world of divine reality and promise.¹

Barth and his associates eventually made an impression on America which contributed to the rise, if not of a neo-orthodoxy, of a new theological realism that was to find most persuasive expression in the word and writings of Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr, like Barth, had not only served as pastor in an industrial parish but also employed a Marxist analysis that gave him insight into the oppression and needs of his people.² He was ready for the realistic and promising Biblical word as it was being spoken and witnessed in European neo-orthodoxy. Thus, from the early thirties through World War II and into the fifties, theological realism and

1. For the beginnings of Barth's theology see James D. Smart, trans. *Revolutionary Theology in the Making* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 11-64.

2. See Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960 [original, 1932]), for an early articulation of theological ethics done from this perspective.

neo-orthodoxy were to find sufficient soil in America to grow and eventually predominate in centers of American theology. However, during the latter years of this period (in 1944 to be exact) Dietrich Bonhoeffer, while in prison, made some observations that were to bring neo-orthodoxy into question. He had come to the realization that modern man had come of age, that he had "matured" to the point that he no longer needed his "father" God to negotiate his world; at no point in his understanding of himself or his world was it necessary or even possible for him any longer to resort to the God-hypothesis. He was on his own.³ It was almost twenty years later before this vision was to illuminate the American scene, interestingly enough in significant measure through the mediation of the English Bishop, John A. T. Robinson. He understood Bonhoeffer's vision and the correlative attack upon the "positivism" of Barthian theology as a call to be "honest to God" and confess that the neo-orthodox tradition with its transcendent, personal heavenly "father" no longer speaks to our mature age.⁴ Corresponding voices in the United States which joined in the so-called "death of God" theology replied with a firm "amen," and challenged the United States to acknowledge its maturity and to throw off the yoke of European neo-orthodoxy, which, it appears, had never so radically claimed our theological existence as it had the European.⁵ In fact, it then became evident that America had never been "neo-orthodox," certainly not "Barthian." Our Depression, shocking as it was, caused nothing like the suffering of war and its aftermath. Furthermore, we were victors and not the victims of wars that never reached our shores. No, that "neo-orthodoxy," born of European despair and pessimism, had never truly been our theology. In our immaturity we had aped the Old World; like children we had persistently followed the pied piper of German theology, but now we were at the threshold of the mature declaration and acceptance of our responsibility and prepared to sing our own theological tune.

I stress that Bonhoeffer merely illuminated our situation; he did not create or shape it. His vision enabled American theology to realize that "neo-orthodoxy" was a façade that had for awhile hidden our indigenous reality, even in the case of Reinhold Niebuhr.

3. See the correspondence beginning April 30, 1944 in *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: S.C.M. Press, Fontana Books, 1953), pp. 90ff.

4. John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 11-64.

5. See Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), pp. 23-50.

Or, in other words, American theological independence appeared long overdue. We had mature resources and needed only to claim them. So, this move to independence in responsibility for our maturation was two-edged, including both a "no" to neo-orthodoxy and a subsequent "yes" to the resources of our maturity. Let us examine the negative moment first.

Recall that neo-orthodoxy was a theology made possible by the Bible. It was a theology for which the Bible was the word of God and the necessary and sufficient ground of theological existence. The casting off of this legacy meant that the Bible was no longer necessary or sufficient for God-talk and so for theological existence. The Bible and theology were fatefully separated.

This turning from the Bible, which for neo-orthodoxy had been the only possibility of theology, understandably brought theological existence itself into question. The death of the Bible was the death of God—the mythical personal deity of the Bible who was Jesus' "Father in heaven." Bishop Robinson rejected both the Bible myth of the God "up there" and the metaphysical vision of the God "out there," and asked rhetorically about "the end of theism."⁶ Speaking for himself and other theologians of the death of God, William Hamilton plaintively confessed that "we do not know, do not adore, do not possess, do not believe in God. . . . We are not talking about the absence of the experience of God but about the experience of the absence of God."⁷ For a theologian trained, as Hamilton, in the tradition of neo-orthodoxy, for which the Bible had been the primary if not the only possibility of God-talk, the death of the Bible meant the impossibility of such talk; it was the event of God's own death.⁸

When I speak of the death of the Bible, I should be understood as referring to the neo-orthodox Bible—the Bible as the Word of God. The Bible as a history book and as an important moment in our culture and in the history of the now mature theologian of course remained. Insofar as this Bible witnesses to the historical

6. Robinson, pp. 29ff.

7. Altizer and Hamilton, p. 28.

8. The separation of theology from Bible was aided by (and itself aided) the separation of Bible from theology. Brevard Childs cites especially the efforts of Krister Stendahl to separate radically the descriptive task of Biblical studies from the constructive task of the theologian. See Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), p. 79, and as well the entire chapter, "The Cracking of the Wall," (pp. 61-87, especially pp. 77-87 where he discusses "the theological dimension.")

Jesus, he also remained an important historical fact, though with the death of God he had died as the "Christ" or the "Son of God." As Altizer stated, "the Jesus whom we know is wholly detached from the divine attributes of his traditional image."⁹ The cross of Jesus is precisely the event of kenosis in which the transcendent, personal deity dies; it is the event in which Jesus is given over not to God but to man and to human history.¹⁰ So, while the negative moment of the throwing off of neo-orthodoxy meant the death of God, the death of Jesus as the Son of God, and of the Bible as the word of God, it did not mean the death of the Bible as history, or of Jesus as a fact of history. Theologians appeared to have Bible and Jesus, but for the moment no theology, no word of God or word about God, except in the case of those who could digest the dialectic of a "theology" of a dead God. As subsequent events in the history of our theology were to disclose, that dialectic was in fact not digestible, and theology, in order to remain theology, had to find new possibilities of God-talk, a foundation for theological existence other than the Bible. On the other hand, since the Bible and Jesus did not disappear, but remained as moments of our history, they too had to be dealt with. However, we must stress that the God quest had to be undertaken beyond and independently of the Bible, and, of course, the Bible was then free to be pursued historically, independently of theological questions and concerns.¹¹

Neo-orthodoxy—the theology of the word of God—was born in the parish. It was church theology. Understandably, if new theological possibilities were to be found, they were likely to manifest themselves in a different context—namely, the academic, preferably that of the university. Thus the sixties witnessed the exodus of many distinguished theologians from the more churchy halls of the seminary to the more objectively academic environs of the university. In his debate with Barth, Harnack denied the possibility of a scientific study of theology within the context of the Church and faith. Whereas Barth, and neo-orthodoxy generally, found it to be the only way, mature American theology, having thrown off neo-orthodoxy, was to reconfirm Harnack's judgment and return to the university in pursuit of a scientific theology that would stand the test of the times. The first task was the justification of theological

9. Altizer and Hamilton, p. 135.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 30ff.

11. Brevard Childs, *op. cit.*, documents this development thoroughly.

existence itself by the discovery of new possibilities of God-talk.¹²

The alternative to Biblical (neo-orthodox) theism, theology authorized by the Bible, was a natural theology authorized by universal human experience. This was and is not explicitly acknowledged in many cases, because of the historical hangover from neo-orthodoxy's critique of natural theology. Nevertheless, that was the only alternative. As theologians settled into the university to undertake the quest of God, it became apparent that there were already mature theologians at work who were prepared to point the way. Although their distinctive alternatives had been developed for some time, they had been hidden and significantly obscured in the shadow of the umbrella of neo-orthodoxy. Now, as theology moved out from this shadow, these alternatives emerged, and there were three major ones—the ontological theology of Paul Tillich at Union-Columbia, the historical-ethical theology of H. R. Niebuhr at Yale, and the tradition of process theology at the University of Chicago. In pursuit of theological existence, each focused upon a different dimension of experience—respectively the existential “courage to be,” the moral responsibility of historical existence, and the organic process of nature.

Just a brief word about each of these approaches to theology will serve to indicate how they understood and used scripture. Paul Tillich found “God” manifest universally in human experience as the ground of man’s courage to be in the face of existential threats to his being. As the eternal depth or ground and power of being who sustains all existing beings against the powers of non-being and the threatening limits of finitude, God is the infinite and transcendent “Being Itself.” Each historical or existential event of courage to be is thus a symbol of this ultimate ground and power of being.¹³ Two points: 1. God transcends finitude and its categories; he is the God above the personal, finite God of Biblical theism.¹⁴ 2. The Biblical event in general and the Jesus event in particular, insofar as they too are rooted in the ground and power of “Being Itself,” are symbols of it; however, insofar as they symbolize it radically, are indeed “transparent” to it, they are “once for all”

12. The sixties witnessed a spate of writings on the God question, e.g., Frederick Ferré, *Language, Logic and God* (1961); John Hick, *The Existence of God* (1964); Frederick Herzog, *Understanding God* (1966); David Jenkins, *Guide to the Debate About God*, (1966); John A. T. Robinson, *Exploration Into God* (1967).

13. See Tillich's phenomenology of such existential courage, *The Courage To Be* (New Haven: Yale University, 1952).

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 186ff.

symbols, as it were, of the symbolic or sacramental nature of all reality.¹⁵ Tillich's system cannot and does not claim exclusiveness for the Biblical symbols, except insofar as historically and contingently they tend to function exclusively in Western society as the determinative symbols.

H. Richard Niebuhr, in his *Radical Monotheism*, like Tillich advocates a "radical monotheism" that "dethrones all absolutes short of the principle of being itself."¹⁶ This principle of "being itself" he designates as "the One," which is "no one reality among the many but . . . the One beyond all the many." As with Tillich, God is thus the radically transcendent one who is beyond all finitude, even beyond the finitude of Jesus and the personalism of Biblical theism. As such he is eternal, universal, and an immediate presupposition of all human experience, so that faith, as a relationship to the One, is a "universal human necessity."¹⁷

While similar in his basic ontology to Tillich, Niebuhr places a distinctive emphasis upon the moral experience of values as opposed to the ontological experience of courage as the dimension of universal experience in which "the One" manifests itself. The One is thus revealed as the unifying source of all values, as the principle of unity implicit in the diversity of value experiences. Niebuhr developed and modified the position in the direction of deontological ethics by speaking more of responsibility than of values, in which case "the One" is manifest as a 'haunting sense of unity and of universal responsibility.'¹⁸ He is "the One" to whom all respond in every particular moral response. As for the particular events of the Bible—Moses, the Prophets, Jesus, etc.,—they are events of the "incarnation of radical faith." Moses was an example of the radical faith of Israel, whereas Jesus "mediated the radical faith to folk whom Moses and the prophets did not reach. . . ."¹⁹ Jesus is the event of incarnation to the extent that he is "the concrete expression in a total human life of radical trust in the One and of universal loyalty to the realm of being."²⁰

15. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951), I, 120-122.

16. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 37.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

18. *The Responsible Self* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 139.

19. *Radical Monotheism*, pp. 39ff.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Obviously, the Bible is not a necessary, even a primary source for God-talk. Jesus is "a symbol of a dimension of universal experience." The "ethos exemplified in Jesus is not unique."²¹ Jesus is an exemplar of responsibility and thus a symbol, or, as Niebuhr preferred, a metaphor of the One, but he is not the necessary or "root metaphor," for that distinction belongs to the universal experience of "responsibility," through which we are finding, he says, a new way "to understand Jesus Christ as well as a new form through which to understand ourselves."²² The implications for Niebuhr's use of the Bible are clear by the order and style of his *Radical Monotheism*, in which the first chapter is given to a definition of monotheism and monotheistic faith without reference to the Bible, and certainly without a Biblical style, as witness his preference for such symbols of deity as "the One," the "ground of being," "the source of values," etc. The same structure and style are evident in *The Responsible Self*. Niebuhr can and does do theology without the Bible. As a Westerner for whom Moses, Jesus, the prophets and the apostles are inescapable moments of historical destiny, he understandably though not necessarily cites the Biblical narrative as exemplary, as a record of the incarnation of "radical monotheism."

While the Chicago school of theology has been around for some time, in recent years those who have succeeded more than others in its rediscovery in response to Bonhoeffer's vision are John Cobb and Schubert Ogden, though mention should be made of the late D. D. Williams and Norman Pittenger.

Tillich's vision of Being Itself is mediated by the experience of being, and Niebuhr's awareness of "the One" by moral and social responsibility; however, Cobb, for instance, looks to the "natural" or physical dimension of life for his keynote. He is distressed by the ontological dualism of the spiritual and the physical and would overcome it "through a critique of the notion of the physical as physical."²³ His analysis of the physical shows that it is actually a process or sequence of "energy events." Energy events are the ultimate dimension of reality and include not only the so-called physical but the spiritual or mental as well, for the latter refers to energy events that are "conscious," events "in which thinking takes

21. *The Responsible Self*, p. 167.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 158ff.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

place.”²⁴ Here is the basic metaphor for God, who may also be understood as an energy event, albeit, a “very special energy event” which is all-inclusive and which constitutes itself by providing every other energy event with an ideal for its own realization.²⁵ “He is at once the source of novelty and the lure to finer and richer actualizations embodying that novelty.”²⁶ In a word, he is the source and ground of the natural process that embraces both the physical and mental dimensions of life. The awareness of the possibility and necessity of this experience of a process that drives persons forward and calls them, together with all of reality, to actualize the ideal in their own particular occasion and event, compels us to speak about God as the ground and source of this responsibility and possibility. This vision of reality “is the fundamental clue to thought and sensibility.”²⁷

Again, since Cobb can and must develop his position because of the universal experience of reality, he is not dependent upon scripture or Christian tradition. Unlike most traditional theology, “the starting point in earlier verbal formulations [apparently including the Bible] is not required.”²⁸ Theology’s subject matter is not distinctive, for it is concerned with “questions of importance for man’s meaningful existence.”²⁹ Such questions are universal and immediate to all experience. However, while Cobb’s theology does not need the Bible, his Christian heritage moves him to look to it for perspective on experience, although experience itself remains the source and basis of theology. Biblical symbols, Schubert Ogden tells us, have as their reference “the abiding structure and meaning of our actual existence here and now. . . .”³⁰

Reflecting a similar position, Ogden observed that Bultmann’s failure was his refusal to accept “the implication that the significance of Jesus is simply that he decisively manifests or re-presents man’s universal possibility of authentic existence in and under the love of God.”³¹ In a word, theology, even “Christian” theology, is

24. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

28. John B. Cobb, Jr., *A Christian Natural Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), p. 253.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 254.

30. Schubert Ogden, *The Reality of God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 210.

31. Schubert Ogden, *Christ Without Myth* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), pp. 160ff.

natural and universal and depends on no "supernatural" and particular Biblical words or witness. The reality of God is "constitutive of not only the special faith attested in scripture, but the common faith and experience of all men simply as such."³²

Formally, these three sources of mature American theology are very similar, differing primarily in terms of their root metaphors or symbols, but agreed that human experience itself speaks of God and provides both the necessary sufficient ground of theology without necessary or essential recourse to scripture.

In our review of Cobb and Ogden we have considered some of the more recent expressions of theology in the Chicago tradition. There are also later developments more in the tradition of Tillich and H. R. Niebuhr. Langdon Gilkey, for instance, appears to move with comfort within the Tillichian tradition, though certainly stamping it with his distinctive approach, for unlike Tillich he has had to contend more directly with the phenomenon of secularity and the apparent meaninglessness, if not the impossibility, of God-talk. It is necessary for him to discover and analyze again the dimension of experience to which religious language might apply. As he states, "a definite apprehension of the sacred is required in order that there be specific, particular, symbolic forms of religious discourse and out of them assertive propositions capable of validity and invalidity."³³ Theology which thus begins with experience cannot go the route of the hermeneutical and neo-orthodox theology which would seek to base God-talk on the Bible and the word of God, for such theology appears to presuppose the meaningfulness of religious language, is subject to no verification in human experience, and fails to relate to human experience and our real life situation.³⁴ Instead, the particular symbols of the Christian faith and the theological reflection upon them presuppose an awareness established philosophically of the universal experience of the sacred, what Tillich designated as the ultimate concern. Theology is 'Biblical' only because the general experience of ultimacy or sacrality is "socially and historically conditioned."³⁵ Historical, social contingency, not divine election, is the authority for whatever touch theology makes with its historical base.

32. See *The Reality of God*, pp. 21ff.

33. Langdon Gilkey, *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God Language* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), p. 417.

34. See Gilkey, pp. 194-202.

35. Gilkey, p. 427.

In Langdon Gilkey we witness a relatively unequivocal fidelity to the general method of Paul Tillich. Gordon Kaufmann of Harvard, however, appears only recently to have shed the remnants of neo-orthodoxy in favor of a more consistent pursuit of an approach that finds its antecedents in H. R. Niebuhr as well as Tillich. In his *Systematic Theology* . . . , Kaufmann evidently is seeking to some extent to remain in the "Barthian" neo-orthodox camp. The "historicist's perspective" he advocates is a theological point of view determined by the particular historical events witnessed by the scriptures. Since the Christian gospel is the announcement of "a particular act of God in man's history," then, he states, "it is evident that the ultimate epistemological foundation of Christian faith and theology must be the reports of witnesses to that event."³⁶ We sense some confusion and ambivalence when he speaks with approbation of Tillich's method of correlation to conclude that the historical norm [scripture above all] can adjudge whether a given position or claim is 'Christian,' but that "it is with reference to the experimental norm that we can adjudge whether it 'makes sense'."³⁷ This confusion, itself making dubious sense, runs through his *Systematic Theology*. However, by 1970, in his essay "Christian Theology and the Scientific Study of Religion," he drops his neo-orthodoxy altogether and comes down firmly and without confusion or contradiction in favor of an experimentally based and determined theology.³⁸

He perceives that theology cannot be independent, grounded as it were on an independent historical event, like Jesus. With Troeltsch and the mainstream of mature American theology, he knows that Jesus was relative to his times, "a man shaped by his culture and by the needs of his own time."³⁹ He asks, rhetorically, "by what right, or on what ground, was any particular event . . . or person to be regarded as ultimately authoritative for man, even Christian man."⁴⁰ He concludes that theological method can no longer be formulated on the basis of God's revelation [i.e., the Biblical events] . . . ; it must now explore, criticize and reconstruct or reconfirm that basis itself."⁴¹ The Christian tradition, with its

36. Gordon Kaufmann, *Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. 44.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

38. Gordon Kaufmann, *God the Problem* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1972), pp. 17-40.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Bible, becomes then but a contingent, historical "perspective" from which to "see and understand the emerging contemporary experience."⁴²

That the Bible plays a secondary role is obvious, and for our purposes it is unnecessary to investigate the direction in which Kaufmann would move, appealing to Tillich, process thought, linguistic philosophy, etc., in order to provide alternative foundations for theology. Significantly, whereas Barth is the most quoted theologian in his *Systematic Theology*, he is cited rarely in *God the Problem*, with scarcely any exceptions, only to be put down or out of consideration. While the *Systematic Theology* has an extensive index of Biblical passages, *God the Problem* has none, with few references to be indexed should he have desired one.

While the mainstream of mature American theology has moved figuratively if not literally to the university to search scientifically and systematically for a universal depth dimension of contemporary experience upon which to establish the necessity and possibility of theology, there are some dissident theologians who fail to appreciate the universality of this university-established experience, and instead call attention to the plurality of individual experiences in contemporary culture. Perhaps most representative of this approach is Harvey Cox, who protests against the domination of theology based on what I have referred to as "university religion." He designates it, as well as all traditional religion, "signal religion," "religion that is coded, systematized, controlled and distributed by specialists."⁴³ In effect, he protests that once theology is understood to arise out of experience, then in a pluralistic society such as is ours today it is simply arbitrary to attach universal authority and significance to any particular experience. He advocates a "radical theology" which somewhat romantically presupposes attention to "one's own feelings in the midst of a new experience."⁴⁴ In search of a feelingful experience of the new, this middle class establishment person turns to "the people," in particular the poor and the new woman with the sensitized consciousness. Theology becomes the biography or storytelling of the person of the theologian as he or she enters into these new experiences of "the people." As such, it is not *theo-logos*, "reflective, analytical, objec-

42. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

43. Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1973), p. 10.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

tive,"⁴⁵ but rather a playful activity . . . endowed with a certain kind of 'ludic consciousness'.⁴⁶ It playfully debunks the "magical authority of sacred texts and the spurious legitimacy of proud rulers." It is a "make-believe" which seeks to involve a form of "human consciousness which can move from one world to another without falling to pieces"; i.e., a consciousness that cherishes and lives through pluralism without compromising it in the comprehensive search for the 'really real,' the abstract universal.⁴⁷ Finally, this theology is "useless," done for its own sake. It celebrates as an end in itself the pluralism and novelty of personal experience, especially the experience of the emerging poor and the new "conscientized" woman.⁴⁸

Such theology echoes the Biblical corpus in appreciating the narrative or story form, but its contents, derived wholly from present individual experience as it is informed by the religion of "the people," is independent of the Biblical narrative for its discovery or expression. Scripture is unnecessary for this ludic (not to say ludicrous) "theology," which has authoritative access to deity in personal experience, the novel experience available in a pluralistic world.

Lest I be charged with scholarly neglect and oversight, I should say a word concerning a dimension of contemporary theology I have overlooked viz., the hermeneutical tradition in theology that has its origins in the work of Rudolf Bultmann. I think, for instance, of the so-called "New Hermeneutic" and the continuing debate and conversation among Bultmannians, post-Bultmannians, tangential Bultmannians, etc., etc. However, as far as I am concerned this conversation has become moribund, almost incestuous, and of little impact anymore on the development of theology in America. It has become antiseptically academic, long uprooted from the concrete historical situation that gave rise to it and in which it found its necessity and significance.

There is a recent theological development, however, which presupposes instead an experience of godlessness and therefore the necessity, if not the possibility, of a word from God, such as is found in the Bible. I refer to so-called "liberation theology." The common denominator in all forms of liberation theology is the

45. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*, p. 321.

48. See *ibid.*, ch. 11, pp. 288-301.

commitment to enter somehow the world and experience of the poor and oppressed, the "marginals" of our world, and to participate in their struggle for liberation. These marginals are those who do not find God at the depths of their experience, but rather a satanic godlessness. They are suspicious of the "God" who is alleged to lie at the depths of establishment experience, since it is from the establishment and often in the name of its so-called God that they experience the oppression and demonic denial that attests the apparent absence of God. So, while the mainstream looks confidently for God in its situation, the marginals look for a God who will "liberate" them from their situation, and the situation of their oppressor which so determines their own situation. Mature American theology looks for God in the world; liberation theology hopes and so struggles for a new world in God.

A second characteristic of liberation theology follows, viz., a common recognition of the necessity of social analysis and the usefulness, if not the necessity, of a Marxist analysis in particular. The reason for this emphasis is the justified persuasion that if the God of establishment experience is the source of marginal suffering and godlessness, then establishment experience, religion, and theology are in truth ideological expressions of a godless economic and political tyranny. Marx focused this ideological appropriation of religion more sharply than most. Very much aware of Marx's analysis, Frederick Herzog of the Divinity School of Duke University, a leading North American representative of liberation theology, therefore understands liberation theology as "ideology criticism."⁴⁹

For my part, the third and decisive aspect of liberation theology is a consequent and necessary turn to the Biblical revelation of the transcendent God as revealed in the event of liberation in Jesus Christ. For a powerless, marginal, oppressed people caught up in the struggle for their liberation and justice, the Biblical word can become not only viable but necessary. They are open to the vision of Yahweh as "the God who intervenes in history to destroy the unjust . . . and to save the oppressed from the injustice which they suffer and which unfailingly cries out to heaven."⁵⁰ In North America the tradition of liberation theology is just about as old as the black Christian experience. Its most notable recent expression

49. Frederick Herzog, "Liberation Theology as Ideology Critique," *Interpretation* (October, 1974), XXVIII.

50. José Porfirio Miranda, *Marx and the Bible*, trans. John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 96.

is in the works of James Cone, in his *Black Theology of Liberation* and *God of the Oppressed*.⁵¹ It is the black experience of oppression that moves the black Christian to be so Jesus-centered and Biblically rooted. In Jesus the black found and finds the transcendent liberator. As Cone states:

Jesus is the subject of Black Theology because he is the content and the hopes and dreams of black people. He was chosen by our grandparents, who saw in his liberating presence that he had chosen them and thus become the foundation of their struggle for freedom. He was their truth, enabling them to know that white definitions of black humanity were lies. When their way became twisted and senseless, they told Jesus about it. He lifted their burdens and eased their pain, thereby showering upon them a vision of freedom that transcended historical limitations.⁵²

When the slaves were uprooted from their African past, those among them who became Christian found their first and truest story in the Bible, the story of their creation as God's children and of their promised deliverance in the coming kingdom of Christ. They were truly a people of the Bible. According to Bishop James Walker Hood of the A.M.E. Zion Church, "the Holy Bible has stood as an everlasting rock in the black man's defense. God himself has determined that the black man shall not be robbed of his record. . . ."⁵³ This radical Biblical quality of black religion and theology is almost *prima facie*, as any familiarity with the "Negro spiritual" will indicate. It scarcely needs further arguing. Where a people are truly defenseless, then the divine defense, the word of God, may become both necessary and real.

The dean of Latin American liberation theologians, Gustavo Gutierrez, understands theological reflection today as "necessarily . . . a criticism of society and the Church *insofar as they are called and addressed by the word of God*."⁵⁴ It seeks to become a "critical theology, worked out in *the light of the Word* accepted in faith and inspired by a practical purpose. . . ."⁵⁵ Even more explicitly, he

51. *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970). *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

52. *God of the Oppressed*, p. 32. So, in his introduction Cone admits that as a theologian speaking to the black experience he went "instinctively" to the scripture (p. 6). The black theologian, the liberation theologian, "is before all else an exegete, simultaneously of scripture and existence." (p. 8).

53. James Walker Hood, *One Hundred Years of the African Methodist Zion Church* (New York: A.M.E. Zion Book Concern, 1895), p. 34.

54. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. Sister Caridad and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 11. (Italics mine).

55. *Ibid.* (Italics mine).

states that "the biblical message, which presents the work of Christ as a liberation, provides the framework for this [Gutierrez's] interpretation."⁵⁶ Of course, it is only as the word is read in the company of the oppressed, in participation in their struggle, that the Bible is faithfully heard. Indeed, "participation in the process of liberation is an obligatory and privileged focus for Christian life and reflection. In this participation will be heard nuances of the Word of God which are imperceptible in other existential situations and without which there can be no authentic or fruitful faithfulness to the Lord."⁵⁷

I find it very significant that liberation theology, despite the crisis in Biblical theology and its recent demise in the mainstream, has already produced two Biblical theologies—notably, Frederick Herzog's *Liberation Theology* and José Porfirio Miranda's *Marx and the Bible*. The striking common denominator in both cases, aside from rather tacit (Herzog) and explicit (Miranda) references to Marx, and of course, the attention to the Bible, is the stringent eschewing of apologetics. Attempting as they both do to approach the Bible and the task of theology from the vantage point of a people oppressed by the present powers of the world and in a struggle for a new world, they understandably neither owe nor can offer any justification or apology to that old order. Herzog's task is not to answer to the world, but to undertake "an exercise in the discipline of a new listening" to the word and then to witness its promise of a new world.⁵⁸ Miranda, observing that "we have had more than enough apologetics in recent centuries," declares that he is "not attempting to prove anything," but rather only wishes "to understand what the Bible says."⁵⁹

The reference to the North American, Herzog, brings to mind the significant and growing North American theological movement referred to as the theology of women's liberation. At this present juncture, the theology of this movement is less easy to characterize. In the case of Mary Daly, for instance, it is more of an anti-Church theology movement, and her writings are, as she herself claims, "philosophical." She writes not as a powerless marginal, but as a member of the powerful other half of our society. Her confidence and hope, therefore, are not in a transcendent deity and the liberat-

56. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

58. Frederick Herzog, *Liberation Theology: Liberation in the Light of the Fourth Gospel*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1971), p. 26.

59. Miranda, p. 35.

ing event of Jesus Christ, but in the untapped power of womanhood. Her task, she writes, "is to study the potential of the women's revolution to transform human consciousness . . . that is, to generate human becoming."⁶⁰ Rather than God's bringing liberation to women and so to all who are oppressed, it is the rising consciousness of women that "has the power to turn attention around from the projections of our culture [false male projections] to the radically threatened human condition."⁶¹ In other words, "in the very process of becoming actual persons, of confronting the non-being of our situation, women are bearers of history."⁶²

On the other end of the spectrum is, for instance, Letty Russell, who stands responsibly within the tradition of theology as well as within the experience and oppression of women. She is able to identify with Paul's awareness that the whole creation groans in travail, awaiting not, as in the case of Mary Daly, women's rising consciousness, but God's raising up of women and men, all creation, in Jesus Christ.⁶³ Certainly there is in the theology of Letty Russell a new interest in scripture as a possible source and norm of theology, although one does not sense here the radical need reflected in both black and Latin American liberation theology. Dr. Russell evidences a good deal of confidence in the life experiences of women and the potential of their immanent power.⁶⁴ This equivocation is even more apparent in Rosemary Ruether, who occasionally suggests that it is not so much the case that women and the oppressed need the liberating Biblical word as that the word itself is in need of the liberating word of women to deliver it from the debilitating sexism that has enthralled it almost from the beginning.⁶⁵

In conclusion, it cannot be said that all theology that calls itself "liberation theology" is Biblical—i.e., radically dependent upon the Bible for its word and power. It can be said, however, that there is a strong current in this "new" theology which is distinguished from all other forms of contemporary theology precisely by its fundamental dependence upon the Bible.

60. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), p. 6.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

62. *Ibid.*

63. See Letty Russell, *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective—A Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), pp 33ff.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

65. See "Women's Liberation and the Church (New York: Association, 1970), pp. 32, 35f.

Biblical Missiology and Mission

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It is ironical that *missiology* ("the scholarly study of . . . the missionary dimension of the Christian church") is "coming into its own" just when *missions* (the active outreach of the Gospel in witness and service) seems to be on the decline. It is also ironical that missiology as a discipline, as a systematic program of research and analysis, should be lifted out of academe and out of exclusive Roman Catholic terminology not by narrowing ranks of traditional Protestant scholars, but by the Evangelicals.

The American Society of Missiology, inaugurated officially in 1973, emerged from the Association of Professors of Missions because of growing interest among missionaries, mission executives, and teachers—from both the Roman Catholic and the conservative wings of the Church—who were not technically eligible for membership in the A.P.M. Its current president is a priest of the Society of the Divine Word. Its modest but articulate little quarterly, *Missiology* (\$8 per year), is edited and published from (not exclusively by) the circle of specialists around the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. It is an exciting and stimulating constellation.

More surprising, for those still laboring under ancient stereotypes, conservative Evangelicals (to use an imprecise generic label) are predominantly responsible for developing missiology as a science. Their mission centers in Pasadena and elsewhere bulge with the latest computer equipment and statistical surveys. *Missiology* (the magazine) "continues," not replaces, *Practical Anthropology*, and many of its articles describe field data collected with professional efficiency. Whatever the Biblical assumptions and evangelistic goals these modern missiologists hold, their methods are no longer limited to pious but uninformed proclamation or manipulation. In sensitivity to cultural and psychological traditions (if not always to social and political change) they are putting most of us "main-line" teachers of missions to shame.

Whether missions itself—as a movement, not simply individual projects—is on the wane local congregations and world denomina-

tions will have to determine for themselves. The overseas personnel of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries did *not* reach the lowest figure anticipated a year ago. In addition to unprecedented response to the hunger crisis, sacrificially committed church members rallied to support the World Division program and to meet the accelerating costs of global inflation. Simultaneously Christian leaders in many nations flatly rejected the call for a "moratorium" on Western missionaries (and Western funds!), while continuing to affirm the need for greater self-determination in every area.

Yet no one can deny that the missionary enterprise is at present in one of the ebb tides so clearly traced by Kenneth Scott Latour-ette. A wave of neo-isolationism, disillusioned by Vietnam or fearful of Angola, reverses much of our historic interest in "foreign" people and places—at the very time when energy shortages, ecology, and economy demonstrate more clearly than ever before our global interdependence. Churches which still schedule annual "mission studies" are rare enough to be noteworthy. "Missionary rallies" attract only the faithful few. College and seminary enrollments in international courses, even on foreign policy or world religions, have dropped conspicuously in recent years. Christians in the pews, as well as critics in the press, voice doubts about "imposing" our (religious) values on other people, though we measure their worthiness by our (political) standards.

By and large we do not want to get "involved"—though we are still ready to contribute generously in order to *buy* national security or eternal salvation. And we do it by conscripting and debasing the term *missions*. Military missions—the \$9.5 billion U.S. arms exports in 1975 represented 51 per cent of international military sales, as compared to 27 per cent by the Soviet Union. Trade missions—to explore where to drill for oil and whom to bribe. Diplomatic missions—casting a respectable aura over undiplomatic behavior. CIA missions—in competition with the most incredible James Bond exploits. Preaching missions—long on haranguing and short on listening.

When someone once asked Mahatma Gandhi what was the greatest obstacle to Christianity in India, his reply was short and simple: "Christians." So the problem of missions today may lie within the Christian Church—at home as well as abroad. Statements like the following emanate not from board headquarters, but from bored congregations who have never been challenged by the missionary imperative: "Charity begins at home; we must look after

our own." "Why do they have to *fight* for independence? Revolution is too violent; it's un-Christian." "Sure, the church is good for the wife and kids, but those coloreds are happier the way they've always lived." "I believe in ecumenicity, but church union would wipe out 600,000 Methodists from North India." "As a Baptist deacon told William Carey, if God wants to save the heathen, He can do it without your help or mine."

In various churches—not only the United Methodist—critics are insinuating that missions have been undermined by a lack of "Scriptural Christianity." That charge is unfair and untrue. A careful scrutiny of denominational and ecumenical statements, an open hearing of sermons and speeches by church leaders, reveals no abandonment of the Biblical basis for the Christian world mission. A "declaration" adopted by the Board of Missions in 1971 begins:

The imperative of the World Division is to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of all people and societies. Persons and communities must have the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ, to study the meaning of the Christ event for themselves and their world, and to respond in the commitment of faith and action to Him.

At the World Council Assembly in Nairobi in December, 1975, the first—and most popular!—discussion group was on "Confessing Christ Today." Among numerous "Recommendations to the Churches" that Section urged: ". . . that regional or local clusters of churches engage in reflections based on Bible study and common experience, on the common content of their faith. . . ."

It also proposed "that the churches . . . study . . . processes of communication applicable to matters of faith and the interpretation of Scriptures, and that they give special attention to the question as to how their own interpretation of the Bible is culturally conditioned." There lies the crux of the issue. Modern missiology has not discarded Scriptural Christianity. It has recognized that Christ's mission to a world in revolutionary change requires fresh interpretation, fresh application, even fresh selection of Biblical texts—not simply new computers, scholarly anthropology, or even warm evangelistic hearts.

For hundreds of years, hundreds of thousands of missionaries—and millions of devout churchgoers supporting them—have been inspired by the Great Commission, usually quoted from the Ariston ending of Mark: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mk. 16:15) Despite the textual problems with this passage, and the anachronistic Trinitarian formula in Mt. 28:18-20, the parallel verses in Lk. 24:45-49 and Acts 1:7-8,

plus the repeated admonition to Peter in Jn. 21:15-17, leave no room for doubt about Jesus' final commandment. Would that the Church had been as clear in its obedience!

Yet disagreements over "translating," "exegeting" and "applying" the Great Commissions are no merely modern phenomena. Faithful Protestants are often disillusioned to learn that the Great Reformers tended to ignore or to discount the missionary mandate. Martin Luther declared that after the apostles "no one has any longer such a universal apostolic command."¹ Either the directive was intended only for the original disciples, or it had been sufficiently fulfilled by earlier missionary witness. According to Richey Hogg of Perkins School of Theology, "the overwhelming and well-nigh unanimous evidence points in the Reformers to no recognition of the missionary dimension of the Church."² To be sure, there were contemporaneous explanations—political, financial, geographic, ecclesiological, theological—but we are concerned here only with the apparent neglect of Scriptural authority.

Today the distorted—and un-Christlike—debate about evangelism *versus* service might easily rest on the question whether "making disciples" means primarily "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" or "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Obviously it involves both: faith and ethics, sacrament and practice. Most missionaries have been less "hung up" over priorities and emphasis than "armchair strategists" (or "back-pew drivers"). No one who professes to be a Christian can escape the categorical imperative of the Great Commission. No one in responsible mission administration or missiology has any desire to do so. But at the end of the second Christian millenium, in a world increasingly secularistic and pluralistic, the Gospel must be interpreted and expressed in ways that are both meaningful to contemporary cultures and faithful to the eternal Christ.

The remainder of this article, therefore, will seek to outline, to suggest, to illustrate—but not to delineate comprehensively—three areas in which a broader Biblical base is currently being employed to define and undergird the Christian world mission. The

1. Quoted in Gustav Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions from the Reformation to the Present Time* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1901), pp. 14-15.

2. "The Rise of Protestant Missionary Concern, 1517-1914," in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *The Theology of the Christian Mission* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 99.

first—most ancient and most obvious—is the witness of service already mentioned. The second is the universal presence of Christ. The third is the eschatological promise, the assurance that “creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Rom. 8:21)

Witness through Service

Jesus came teaching and healing, feeding the multitudes and liberating individuals from sin. The Carpenter who preached and died and rose again also distributed loaves and fishes on the hillside, along the Galilean lake, in an upper room, at an inn on the Emmaus road. The Bread of Life is physical *and* spiritual. Because of this indisputable fact, Christ's own example, the Church has always recognized—if not always fulfilled—the call to educational, medical, and relief missions as a corollary of evangelism. Replying to his own question, “Is the Medical Missionary Obsolete?”, Kenneth Strachan, a leading spokesman for conservative Evangelicals, has declared: “It becomes all the more important for true Christians to do good, to feed the hungry, to minister to the sick, without any other purpose than to express the compassion within them.”³

From the earliest days of missions, feeding the hungry has involved agricultural services, improved seeds and livestock and fertilizer and scientific methods, as well as food “hand-outs.” Most Christians have agreed that healing the sick includes preventive medicine, public health, nutrition, and sanitation. It becomes less obvious—to some people—that Jesus' concern for the deprived and oppressed is to be imitated in literal, material, political terms. The poor who inherit the Kingdom and the hungry who shall be satisfied (Lk. 6:20-21) are “spiritualized” in Mt. 5:3 & 6. It is far easier for us in the comfortable pew to mythologize away I Samuel—or even Mary—when we read: “He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.” (Lk. 1:52-53)

Did Jesus refer only to some celestial Kingdom “in the sweet by and by” when he proclaimed his mission in Nazareth (Lk. 4:18-19)? If the good news were *only* the message of spiritual salvation, of God's love and forgiveness, why specifically—or even exclusively—

3. *Missionary Mandate* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Dec. 1959-Jan. 1960).

"to the poor"? Does the Incarnation mean so little, is our world view so Docetic, that we can allegorize the promise of "liberty to those who are oppressed" without regard to political or economic or social realities? From the Exodus out of Egypt, through innumerable "wars of liberation" in the Old Testament, right down to the fall of Babylon (and of "the merchants of the earth"!) in Revelation, God is at work actively and sometimes violently to create justice on the earth. Are we absolutely certain that "all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Mt. 26:52) was meant literally, while "I have not come to bring peace but a sword" (Mt. 10:34) was strictly metaphorical? Exegetically I like to believe so, but how, hermeneutically, do we celebrate Revolution in America 1776 and condemn Revolution in Rhodesia 1976?

These passages, too, represent Scriptural Christianity. All of us—preachers and theologians, teachers and missionaries—seek to proclaim the whole Gospel for the whole person in the whole world. We should not be surprised—in any age, especially this one—if the people of God emphasize other Biblical imperatives than those we select and interpret them in different ways for different cultural contexts. To be sure, "the Kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). Yet the Master himself, in a far more central portion of his teachings, asserted that those who fed the hungry, visited the sick and imprisoned, not only did it unto him but will enter into eternal life. (Mt. 25:31-46) "Let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and give glory [not to you or me, to a denomination or a creed, not even primarily to Christ, but] to your Father who is in heaven." (Mt. 5:16)

Orlando E. Costas, one of the most stimulating of contemporary missiologists, discusses from a Latin American perspective "the question of humanization as an integral part of the missionary enterprise . . . Humanization, understood in its biblical perspective is not a mere indirect result of Christ's saving action. It is at the heart of Christ's redemptive activity."⁴ This does not mean that humanitarian service should replace evangelism—or that it is doing so amid our multitudinous global ministries. It does mean that such service—in meeting indescribable human need, in combatting unimaginable injustice and inhumanity—has equally *bona fide* Biblical authority, and therefore should be seen as an essential

4. Orlando E. Costas, *The Church and Its Missions: a Shattering Critique from the Third World* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1974), pp. 175 & 195.

aspect of our Christian witness, not a secondary or derivative obligation. Writing as an Evangelical, Costas continues: "If the Gospel is truly eternally contemporaneous, it must speak concretely to each new situation. This, I repeat, is not a mere question of application. It is a matter of the nature of the gospel itself. . . ."⁵

The Christian Presence

With rare but noteworthy exceptions, Christians have carried out their mission through twenty centuries not only in an advocacy role but as an adversary, vigorously condemning the ignorance, idolatry, and sin of heathen religions.⁶ In varying degrees they have insisted that there is no salvation outside the Church—or (a very vital distinction!) no salvation outside of Christ. For example: "Elements of a primitive revelation may be found in all of these non-Christian religions. But they are so marred and defaced that no one can find salvation in and through them. . . . At best, then, all non-Christian religions are counterfeits of the one true faith."⁷ Such people have been puzzled when a legendary village elder, variously located from China to Africa, finally understands that baptism will in the traditional view separate him eternally from his revered ancestors and therefore chooses his pagan loyalties.

There is good Scriptural justification for this position. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." (Jn. 14:6) "No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 3:11) "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Hopefully we have laid aside the unloving, sometimes coercive, clearly un-Christlike attitudes with which, too often, we have proclaimed an exclusive soteriology. We are mildly concerned about where to assign the men and women of the Old Testament as well as such modern "saints" as Mahatma Gandhi. We know—in theory at least—that *we* are neither the final judges nor the intrinsic, efficient cause of another's salvation.

Missionaries and missiologists wrestle with this problem today, in terms of theology and policy. As faithful to the Biblical commission as any of their predecessors, they know that there are other

5. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

6. "Heathen" and "pagan" are used herein not in a derogatory, discriminatory sense, but in the original meaning of those who are outside the "household of faith."

7. Harold Lindsell, "Fundamentals for a Philosophy of the Christian Mission," in Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

passages (often in the very same books) that suggest other perspectives and other truths. "The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world." (Jn. 1:9) "In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways; yet he did not leave himself without witness." (Acts 14:16-17) "He will render to every man according to his works . . . glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality." (Rom. 2:6-11) "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Mt. 7:21) And many more!

This is not the place to renew the debate. Karl Barth, for all of his insistence on the unique Revelation of God in Christ, acknowledged that it "concerns the whole world . . . concerns all men . . . has imprinted itself upon the nature and history of the world in quite definite forms, and this it does ever anew."⁸ Hendrik Kraemer, asserting the radical discontinuity between revelation and all religion (including Christianity), speaks repeatedly of "tokens" of revelation, God "shining through" other religions, even "revealing himself," and of "acceptable [to whom?] men of faith who live under the sway of non-Christian religions."⁹ Paul Tillich in the final lecture of his life defined revelation as "a particular kind of experience which always implies saving powers. One can never separate revelation and salvation . . . Revelation is received by man in terms of his finite human situation."¹⁰ Vatican II pledges Roman Catholics to "acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture."¹¹

From there it is only a short step for the Council, in no sense retracting its faith that "the Church includes within herself the totality or fullness of the means of salvation,"¹² to speak also of

8. *Revelation* (London: Baillie & Martin, 1937), p. 63.

9. Cited by H. H. Farmer, "The Authority of the Faith," in *The Authority of the Faith* (New York: International Missionary Council, 1939), Madras Series, Vol. I, p. 157.

10. Paul Tillich, "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian," in *The Future of Religions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 81.

11. "Nostra Aetate" (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions), in Walter M. Abbott, ed., *Documents of Vatican II* (New York: The America Press, 1966), p. 663.

12. "Ad Gentes" (Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church), *ibid.*, p. 590.

"whatever truth and grace are to be found among the nations, as as a sort of secret presence of God . . . And so, whatever good is to be sown in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, is not lost."¹³ In the second century Justin Martyr in his *Apologies* declared: "We have shown that Christ is the Logos of whom the whole human race are partakers; and those who lived [in harmony with or in obedience to the Logos] are Christians even though associated atheists."¹⁴ (Notice that Justin stressed *living* according to the Word, not affirming a creed or a particular interpretation thereof.)

Many Protestants are seeking to express the same conviction in different terminology. "We do not *take* Christ to the heathen, to pagan societies; he is already there. The mission, therefore, is to help people—in distant nations or in our own!—to recognize him as Lord and Savior." If Jesus came "not to abolish [the law and the prophets of Israel] but to fulfill them" (Mt. 5:17), why not also the scriptures and traditions of Hinduism or Buddhism?

When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Rom. 2:14-16)

This doctrine of "the unknown Christ" (Raymond Panikkar) or "the anonymous Christian" (Karl Rahner)¹⁵ has great appeal for those who believe in the universality of the Gospel. But it has two obvious difficulties which can only be suggested here without elaboration. If we truly mean to assert that all those who do not acknowledge Christ, who may not even have heard of him, are nevertheless dependent on him for liberation from sin and death, then we are being at least as imperialistic, as condescending, as our ancestors who demanded overt conversion as the sign of salvation. How would we feel to be told that we are crypto-Communists if we happen to believe in a juster distribution of the world's goods or in the dialectic process of history?

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 595-6.

14. Quoted by A. C. Bouquet, "Revelation and the Divine Logos," in Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

15. Karl Rahner touches on this concept in many of his writings; see Anita Roper, *The Anonymous Christian* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1966); also Raymond Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1964).

A second reservation about this notion of the "hidden Christ" is more critical. To hold that pagans are "saved by Christ," without knowledge or conscious commitment, is to ignore the most central and most distinctive element in the entire Gospel: the Incarnation. We may—should!—agree that all persons are children of Almighty God and that in his infinite wisdom and love he has plans for their redemption. Radical monotheism demands no less a faith.¹⁶ But if we are to claim the appellation of "Christian," we must affirm—with whatever diverse understanding—that God came into the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. "As one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men." (Rom. 5:18) "God was in Christ." (II Cor. 5:19) Amen! Hallelujah! But if that means merely an anonymous, universal Spirit, transforming not only our earthly lives but our ultimate destinies by "tokens" of truth and morality, we have exchanged the Incarnation for a unitarian Christology—which the Hindu may justifiably call Brahman or the Buddhist Maitreya or the Muslim Allah.

Without resolving the theological—and Biblical!—inconsistencies, it is possible to argue—from practical expediency or metaphysical conviction, from Christian love or human brotherhood—that persons in mission must be sensitive and receptive to truths and values and ethical standards and devotional experiences in other faiths as well as in our own. This calls for constant rediscovery and study of the infinite variety of riches in the sacred Scriptures. Like the men of Athens, the men and women of Calcutta and Bangkok and Nairobi and Cochabamba may be very religious, perhaps more religious than those of New York and Durham. "What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you." (Acts 17:23)

The Eschatological Promise

If one focus of missiology today is humanitarian service as an indispensable aspect of witness, not simply a by-product of evangelism, and another is "natural theology" based on universal revelation, a third focus is eschatological. Not only God's sovereignty, not only his concern for human history, but his ultimate redemption is *intended* for all creation. This is not universalistic soteriology; it does not necessarily claim that all God's creatures will accept the

16. Cf. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960).

promises and premises of the Kingdom. But it does see the divine plan and purpose as inclusive rather than exclusive, as unifying rather than divisive, as liberating rather than restrictive.

This emphasis has found brilliant—and controversial—expression in the writings of Teilhard de Chardin, Jean Danielou, and other Roman Catholics. Their theory of “cosmic revelation” rests partially, though not entirely, on a scientific, naturalistic world view, but one which they trace unhesitatingly to the Apostle Paul:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now . . . For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because *the creation itself will be set free* from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Rom. 8:22, 19-21, italics added.)

The mission, then, is to proclaim this universal promise, to demonstrate, to facilitate, to expedite that fulfillment. “For in him [Christ] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” (Col. 1:19-20)

In Protestant circles Jurgen Moltmann’s theology of hope leans, despite the concept of realized eschatology, toward the futuristic dimension of salvation.¹⁷ Most forms of liberation theology, on the other hand, stress God’s concern for the incorporation of the oppressed into a present kingdom of justice and freedom. For some Evangelicals the Church’s world mission is a precondition for the eschaton: “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come.” (Mt. 24:14) But let us not forget that Jesus’ parables of the Last Judgment, in the very next chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, reiterate the criteria of loving service rather than creed or ritual. Or that the Lukan parables of the Kingdom harshly slam the door on those who self-righteously trust in piety instead of obedience: “Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame . . . For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.” (Lk. 14:21, 24) “And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.” (Lk. 13:29-30)

17. Cf. Costas, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231 *et passim*.

These few citations, among many which might have been chosen, are not intended to resolve the theological questions inherent in them—or even to uphold the author's own predilections, although those may be obvious. Nor is this hop-skip-and-jump through sample proof texts intended to replace the Great Commissions. "These [justice and mercy and faith] you ought to have done without neglecting the others." (Mt. 23:23) For me, personally and professionally, there is no more irresistible evangelistic call—and promise!—in the entire New Testament than Acts 1:8: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." (Meaning, as many have pointed out, local, national, cross-cultural, and international missions!) *You* shall be my witnesses. Not someone whom you pay to represent you in Sarawak or Zimbabwe. "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, *not counting their trespasses against them*, and entrusting to *us* the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal *through us*." (2 Cor. 5:18-20a, italics added.)

But when one asks the next question, *How* should we witness?, I turn again to that too-familiar, too-simple, too-demanding account of the Last Judgment: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." (Mat. 25:35-36) Clearly this too is Scriptural Christianity.

The Conference on World Mission and Evangelism said in Bangkok in 1973: "We are at the end of a missionary era; we are at the very beginning of world mission." That task of witness, on which the Church's very existence depends, "just as a fire exists by burning" (to quote Emil Brunner),¹⁸ requires new methods, new technology, new attitudes, new anthropology, new commitment on the part of every Christian. Missiology as a new/old discipline can and must rest on Biblical foundations which inform all other aspects of the Church's activity—but a Scripture which is read more openly and applied more broadly to the life of the world.

18. *The Word and the World* (London: SCM Press, 1931), p. 108.

Early Christian Variations on the Parable of the Lost Sheep

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We enter the world of the earliest Christian preachers and writers at some considerable risk. The terrain is foreign; many of the names are conspiracies against the tongue; riddles and obscure clues lurk in the language; and the issues for which people live, battle, and die bewilder the modern mind. To our eyes, those are mysterious energies which run through the thoughts, prayers, sermons, and disputes of ancient believers. Every piece of art, every surviving liturgy, and every written trace of theological warfare underline the fact that first generations of Christians entered the rhythms of religion in ways which catch us by surprise. Our past is richer and much less predictable than we suspect.

One way to part the curtains on this unfamiliar world of ancestors is to watch them at work on a familiar text like the parable of the lost sheep (Lk. 15:3-7). But there is so much to be misunderstood in a venture of this kind that some words of caution may be necessary. The first has to do with the nearly unimaginable circumstances in which early Christians sought to understand and proclaim their faith: the foundations were not in place. No broad agreement existed about the nature of God or the purposes of divine activity. Different people and groups of people experienced their savior and salvation differently. It might have been possible to settle these fundamental questions by turning to the sacred writings, but there was no consensus about what could be called "the Bible." In some quarters, "the Law and the Prophets" were thought dispensable, and in all quarters it was necessary to negotiate *which* "memoirs" and letters of the apostles would take their place among the charter documents of the Christian community. When a third-century Christian thinker accepted his pagan opponent's label of Christianity as a "new thing," he was not innocent of the elements of ferment and change in the religion he defended.¹

1. Origen *Against Celsus* 8.41-47.

The second word of caution concerns our own historical provincialism. New understandings of the Bible made possible by modern critical study are both impressive and welcome. If, however, the assumptions and axioms which we bring to the contemporary task of Biblical interpretation make it impossible to appreciate how people in another age asked "What does the text mean?", our new-found shrewdness will have put us in blinders. A way of understanding the New Testament, for example, which illuminates two periods of time—Jesus' *Sitz* and our own—but leaves the intervening centuries in shadows might serve to alert us to the limitations of our methods and hermeneutic. At any rate, a sense of the transient character of our own presuppositions and rules of Biblical interpretation may make us pause before we brand early Christian (or Medieval or Reformation) treatment of Scripture "exotic" or "bizarre."

In Luke's gospel, it is the Pharisees' complaint that Jesus "receives sinners and eats with them" which prompts his parable-opening question: Is there anyone among you who would not search out one sheep lost from his flock of a hundred? Who would not rejoice, and summon others to share in the rejoicing, at the sheep's recovery? Joy like that, Jesus claims, will be in heaven over the recovery of one repentant sinner—it will surpass the joy over the ninety-nine righteous who do not need to repent.² The two succeeding parables of the lost coin and the prodigal son sound the same notes of celebration. What was lost has been recovered. Rejoice! In comparison with many other New Testament parables and similitudes, Lk. 15:3-7 is clear and uncomplicated. The evangelist employs it (and the remaining parables of chapter 15) to explain and defend the ministry of Jesus (and the Church) to unworthy "strays," and to represent that ministry as the promise of joy which belongs to God's own approaching reign.

This paper concerns itself with what became of this simple story when writers of the next few centuries pondered it, and used it to make sense of their own particular experiences of Christian faith. What meaning did the story of the lost sheep hold for (1) those groups of Christians in the second century who claimed to

2. The parallel in Mt. 18.10ff. is addressed to the disciples and appears as one of the responses to their question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" In this context the parable is about the importance of the "little ones" to the heavenly Father. Cf. the form of the saying in the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*, logion 107, in which the shepherd exerts himself for the stray sheep, "the largest," because he loves it more than the ninety-nine.

possess secret, saving *gnōsis*; for (2) their opponents, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, and Origen, the Alexandrian Biblical expert and theologian of the third century; and for (3) Tertullian, the fiery African writer who was the Church's most fervent advocate and its severest critic?

1. Lost "in the midst of all kinds of suffering . . ."

One of the first people to make theological use of the story of the lost sheep was also one of the wildest figures to stride through the early years of the Christian movement. At least that is how Simon Magus is portrayed by scoffing detractors, who view him as the source of all heresies, the instigator of that irreligion which boasts of a saving *gnōsis*.³ Possibly an account of Simon's life and teaching composed by one of his devotees (apparently they were numerous) would show us a less outlandish and improbable revealer and wonder-worker. But it is also conceivable that it was precisely his extravagant claims and behavior which attracted disciples. Who would not have wanted to learn more about someone who taught that he had appeared as Father among the Samaritans, Son among the Jews, and Holy Spirit to the rest of the nation?!

It was Simon's co-worker and companion, Helen, who earned him the most notoriety with his "catholic" Christian opponents. For Simon, however, she was no embarrassment—indeed, her rôle in his theology and mission was of central importance. When, sometime in the first century, Simon ended Helen's career as a prostitute in Tyre by purchasing her out of slavery, he viewed the transaction not merely as one of human compassion (his enemies suspected his motive was passion), but as a saving event of cosmic significance. Helen, he and his followers believed, was the precious lost sheep of the Gospel, at long last reclaimed by the "Supreme Father" (who in his current worldly manifestation was Simon the Samaritan). For those possessing the religious insight which sees beyond bare historical happenings, the ransoming of Helen was the climax of a long and tragic divine drama. In the beginning, the Father over all things had generated an initial Thought or Intent (*Ennoia*, a feminine word in Greek), by whom he planned to fashion angels and archangels. But Thought took matters into her own hands, formed these (imperfect) angelic beings, who in turn created the visible creation, a place of bad design, filled with fear and jealousy. The angels prevented the return of Thought to her

3. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.23.2.

Father, having learned rebellion from her, and they conspired to hold her captive in the world, "confined . . . in the bonds of flesh."⁴ We are told that "she, passing from body to body, and suffering insults in every one of them, at last became a common prostitute."⁵ The rest of the story nearly tells itself, at least to those capable of perceiving mysteries: the Father's rescue mission made it necessary for him to assume the form of a man (hence his epiphany in Judaea, where he was thought to have suffered on the cross, though he was invincible God), and finally to come and redeem his daughter from slavery.⁶ Simon's liberation of the harlot Helen at Tyre was simultaneously and more profoundly the Supreme Father's release of a spiritual being from entrapment in flesh and a hostile world. In the process this divine rescuer and bringer of saving wisdom "conferred salvation upon men by making himself known to them."⁷ For believers in Simon's revelation of who he was and what he had come to do, the recovery of the lost sheep (Thought/Helen) signalled their redemption as well. It was the act of redemption which assured their release and held the promise that, when the world was dissolved, they would be spared. In the meantime they were guaranteed their freedom from the malevolent and misguided powers who created the material world.⁸ A remark by Irenaeus contains a hint of how this gnostic doctrine was registered by the Simonians; in it one spies (among other things) an emphasis not unfamiliar to readers of Paul:

. . . those who place their trust in Him and in Helena no longer heed them [i.e., the angels who dominate this world], but as being free, live as they please; for men are saved through his grace, and not on account of their own righteous actions.⁹

To the chagrin of his critics, Simon used Jesus' parable of the lost sheep as the primary image of the divine drama he preached—apparently it lent itself in a striking way to his message about a God who searches out those lost in an alien world and carries them heavenward, to their primal home. There is every reason to suppose

4. Tertullian *On the Soul* 34. (Translations throughout the article, unless otherwise noted, are taken or adapted from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, and reissued in 1969 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan.)

5. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.23.2.

6. *Ibid.*, 1.23.3. Tertullian, at his sardonic best, wonders (in *On the Soul* 34) whether Helen was carried back on her redeemer's shoulders or thighs!

7. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.23.3.

8. Tertullian *On the Soul* 34; Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.23.3.

9. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.23.3.

that his followers took delight in Simon's version of the parable because they understood themselves to be included in the celestial celebration.

"Catholic" theologians regarded Simon's revelation and his cultus as perversions of Christian truth, and their denunciation carried the day: the God of Christians did not go by the name of Simon, nor was he in the business of extricating spirits from a demon-oppressed and doomed existence on earth. There is, nevertheless, a trace of irony to be found in moralistic undertones which are part of the attack directed by right-thinking ("orthodox") Christians against Helen, the heavenly Thought tumbled into ill-repute. Recollection of the Pharisaic alarm to which Jesus' parable of the lost sheep was the answer suggests that there is at least this to say on behalf of Simon's religious imagination: he was unafraid to preach a divine compassion (though it was not open to all: the unilluminated were unsaved) which extended the search for strays even as far as a brothel in Tyre.

Not all systems of gnostic Christianity were vulnerable to the same critique waged against the flamboyant Simon. Most proponents of salvation through *gnōsis* preached a similar message of emancipation from flesh and world to enthusiastic congregations of the "Spiritual" and "Perfect," but they did so without making themselves into deities. Knowledge of the story and structure of the cosmos, according to teachers like Valentinus and Basilides, explained why earthlings live in fear and estrangement. More importantly, it delivered souls from their existence in the world as displaced persons, and gave them access to the original home in the company of deity, in the place of "Fullness" (*Pleroma*). In some quarters of the Mediterranean world to which Christianity spread in the second century, this gospel had won the allegiance of the majority of Christians.¹⁰

Among these believers, too, the story of the lost sheep served as a vehicle for recounting the celestial accident which produced the prison of souls, the created order. A gnostic group known as the Marcosians, much given to number symbolism, told of a primal disturbance in the ranks of spiritual beings, the Aeons, and the exclusion of one of these beings from the divine region: "because an error occurred in connection with the twelfth number, the sheep frisked off, and went astray."¹¹ From a fuller description of the

10. See Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (ET, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), chs. 1-2.

same scenario found in the doctrine of a follower of Valentinus we learn who the culprit Aeon was. Sophia, whose attempt to conceive the nature of the invisible "Forefather" failed, produced an abortion-misconception unworthy of the presence of those beings dwelling in the upper region. This flawed and unfulfilled desire, which went by the name of Achamoth, was placed outside the boundaries which marked off divine Fullness (*Pleroma*), and in time produced the Demiurge, creator of earth and its seven heavens. Totally unaware of his own lowly status, this sub-deity, according to Valentinian dogma, was the creator God of the Old Testament. His worshippers called him Lord, Jehovah, Almighty; he was in fact the low-ranking keeper of the dungeon of souls. To the possessor of knowledge, this tragic tale made plain how the material universe became what it is now—a place of ignorance, fear, and grief. It also revealed the existence of the God above the Demiurge, to whom one might flee from captivity in flesh and history. Irenaeus provides us with some glimpses of the Valentinian interpretation of Lk. 15:3-7:

They explain that the lost sheep must represent the mother from whom the Church here is said to have been sown. The wandering is her stay in the midst of all kinds of suffering outside the Pleroma, from which matter, in their opinion, derived its origin . . . the fact that Achamoth wandered outside the Pleroma . . . and was sought after by the Savior, he himself revealed when he said that he had come for the lost sheep.¹²

The strange cast of characters and even stranger happenings show what an elaborate drama was compressed in the image of a recovered sheep. No doubt the intricacies which confuse modern readers held great attraction for ancient worshippers. But the main points of the Valentinian preaching were not mistaken by the adherents: *they* were the progeny of celestial Aeons, legitimately homesick in the world because held hostage far from their transcendent haven. The true identity, destiny, and destination of those capable of enlightenment had been made known when the savior assumed a human disguise in order to redeem spiritual beings from entrapment in materiality and ignorance. It was a gospel for a fearful time, and the note of apprehension which sounds throughout late antiquity is accented, rather than subdued, by a description of gnostic certitude of salvation:

11. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.16.1.

12. *Ibid.*, 1.8.4. Elements of Mt. 15.2 and 18.12ff. appear in the passage.

. . . they hold that they shall be entirely and undoubtedly saved, not by means of conduct, but because they are spiritual by nature . . . it is impossible that spiritual substance (by which they mean themselves) should ever come under the power of corruption. . . .¹³

So it was that advocates of saving knowledge understood themselves to be reclaimed by the shepherd from above and released in joy from the world's instability and impermanence. Scarcely a single important element of this understanding of Christian religion was to escape challenge from other followers of Christ who saw divine nature and action, as well as human nature and the human plight, in very different terms. For them, the parable of the lost sheep could not carry the same meaning, nor hold out the same promise.

2. The Wayward Sheep: Recapitulated and Restored

No one took up the challenge of Valentinus and company with more vigor and persistence than Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons. Even in an age which did not incline to breezy titles, his great attack promised by its name a thorough examination and critique; it was called *Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So-Called*, and ran to five substantial books.¹⁴ There is one sense in which Irenaeus' lengthy rebuttal is uncomplicated. However intricate his particular arguments or exegetical ventures become, it is not difficult to trace a straight line to a few propositions basic to his experience and understanding of the Christian proclamation. They are primary assertions about the identity and purposes of God, and about the arena in which divine action occurs.

It is in the first place axiomatic, Irenaeus argues, that no God of greater majesty and honor than the Lord of creation can be thought to exist. Even if the gnostics' distant, unknowable "Forefather" and his supporting cast of Aeons were not so patently fantastic, so obviously the imaginings of demented minds, there would be the testimony of Scripture and the worship of Christians to refute this or any other plurality of deities. Far from being the benighted and dim-witted angel who, without knowing his limitations, fashions what he can from faulty materials, the Creater Lord of the Hebrews and (now) the Christian people is the holy God—there is no other. It is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, God the Father of Jesus Christ, "who has made heaven and earth, rules over all, and is the only true God, above whom there is no other

13. *Ibid.*, 1.6.2.

14. The shorter title, *Against Heresies*, is the usual name given to the work.

God.”¹⁵ To buttress this assertion, Irenaeus quickly turns to the “Rule of Faith,” one of the most effective weapons in the arsenal of the anti-gnostic theologians: Why else do Christians, “though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth,” profess a uniform belief “in one God, the Father Almighty, who made heaven and earth and the seas and all the things that are in them?”¹⁶

From the claim that ultimate goodness and glory reside in *this* God there follows another conviction which is central to Irenaeus’ several arguments: because it is the good and purposeful work of God, creation is valued. The nature and identity of its author and framer make it blasphemous to count creation intrinsically worthless or beyond redemption.¹⁷ Law-giver, prophet and apostle had denounced as idolatry the worship of things created and made. Now gnostic estimates of the world and its enfleshed populace prompt Irenaeus to charge that God is equally dishonored when creation (whether its prime “stuff” or its embodied beings) is held in contempt.

He is not insisting, as a nature-enthusiast or ecologist might, that our commitment to creation is a good, even imperative thing. The decisive commitment, he believes, is the one *God* has made to creation, and this commitment is total—the very dust into which God first breathed life is encompassed by the divine plan for redemption (*dispensatio*).

Who is correct about the nature of the world and the plight of humankind? Is it because of a prior, distant mishap that the created order is a zone of confusion and darkness, and its inhabitants are prisoners in sluggish flesh? Or does evil exist in the world and among its creatures because human disobedience introduced discord and estrangement into a kingdom of peace? For Irenaeus, the problem harks back to the story of Adam and Eve, and the broken compact which disrupted human relationship with God the lifegiver. Sin, ignorance, and mortality are facts of life in the world *not* because the world is evil by nature, but because the original human likeness to the creator was willingly forfeited. Everyone’s story is the story of Adam, who “lost his natural dis-

15. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.6.4. Chapters 6-12 of Book 3 treat numerous passages from Scripture and from apostolic writings which enforce this assertion.

16. *Ibid.*, 1.10.1.

17. See implications of this for Irenaeus’ doctrine of resurrection in *Against Heresies* 5.2.2.

position and childlike mind" through disobedience.¹⁸ A hard look at the human population, according to Irenaeus' analysis, will not reveal souls plummeted into flesh—all in need of deliverance from "sarkic" ignorance, but only some capable of "pneumatic" liberation. It will reveal instead a disfigured creation, bereft of its original goodness and natural harmony. It will reveal a race of beings who have turned a life of trust in the garden into life at cross-purposes. What, short of a new act of creation, an event of reformation, can touch the dimensions of conflict and betrayal which beset human existence? Who is the redeemer who might restore the primal beauty of creature and creation?

Irenaeus' distinctive answers to these questions shape his way of understanding the parable of the lost sheep. His interpretation, predictably, is directed against the chief assumptions of gnostic piety. To combat the Valentinian claim that salvation consists in escape from the world, the flesh and the Demiurge, the theory is advanced that God's redemptive plan is a "recapitulation." In uniting his Word/Son to his own workmanship in the incarnation, God "headed up again in himself (*in se recapitulans*) the ancient formation of man, that he might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man."¹⁹ This is the idea which controls Irenaeus' description of the shepherd's redemption of the lost sheep.

It was necessary, therefore, that the Lord, coming to the lost sheep, and making recapitulation of so comprehensive a dispensation, and seeking after his own handiwork, would save that very man who had been created after His image and likeness, that is, Adam, filling up the time of his condemnation, which had been incurred through disobedience.²⁰

In the other major passage in which the parable is discussed, we are told that the Son of God, in assuming human nature from Mary,

. . . descend[ed] to those things which are of the earth beneath, seeking the sheep which had perished, which was indeed his own particular handiwork, and ascend[ed] to the height above, offering and commending to his Father that human nature (*hominem*) which had been found, making in his own person the first-fruits of the resurrection of man . . .²¹

The Lukan similitude is entirely in the service of the theologian's central propositions: (1) the framer of the universe, and none other, has sent his own creative Word as shepherd; (2) it is as *creature* that

18. *Ibid.*, 3.23.5.

19. *Ibid.*, 3.18.7.

20. *Ibid.*, 3.23.1.

21. *Ibid.*, 3.19.3.

the sheep is sought out by God, who values his own handiwork and is faithful to his commitments.

From this point the Irenaean soteriology becomes aggressively anti-docetic. Since human beings consist of body taken from the earth and soul quickened by God, it was fitting that the Word become truly incarnate.²² As an actual human being "consisting of flesh, and nerves and bone," the Christ gained nourishment from food, was subject to aging, weariness, pain, and death.²³ According to the Irenaean redemptive scheme, the work of Christ has the effect of undoing and redoing, of reversing and commencing afresh:

... as the human race fell into bondage to death by means of a virgin, so it is rescued by a virgin; virginal disobedience having been balanced in the opposite scale by virginal obedience. For in the same way the sin of the first created man receives amendment by the correction of the First-Begotten, and the coming of the serpent is conquered by the harmlessness of the dove, those bonds being unloosed by which we had been fast bound to death.²⁴

Against the gnostic attempt to disengage religious reality from the temporal and material arena, to disconnect the unknown Father from the God of the prophets and the peasant victim from Nazareth, Irenaeus pits the theology of recapitulation. Elaborating Paul's portrayal of Christ as Second Adam in Rom. 5, he underlines the continuity of the deity's work of creation and redemption.²⁵ The shepherd-redeemer comes to the sheep (which is Adam/human nature/the flawed image and likeness of God) not to lead the way to the world's exit, but to accomplish the restoration of holiness. Redemption has nothing to do with flight from materiality, everything to do with the renovation of creation. A spiritual presence hovering over the ambiguities of human life and history would have brought no salvation worthy of the name. The work of God in Christ, however, recapitulated and reclaimed all the dimensions of the life which humans actually possess, to the end "that he might bring us to be even what he is himself."²⁶ But Irenaeus, as clearly as Paul, knows that the end is not yet. Until the creation is restored to its primeval holiness at the Eschaton, Christians are to

22. This doctrine, also, is firmly established in the "Rule of Faith," as can be seen in Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.10.2 and Tertullian *Prescription Against Heretics* 13.

23. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.2.3.

24. *Ibid.*, 5.19.1.

25. *Ibid.*, 3.18.7 and 3.21.10.

26. *Ibid.*, 5, Preface.

live faithfully and without succumbing to bodily passions. Members of the church are "spiritual" in a pointedly anti-gnostic sense—"not as incorporeal spirits . . . [but as those whose] substance, that is, the union of flesh and spirit, receiving the Spirit of God, makes up the spiritual man."²⁷ Nor will a saint be differently constituted, either apparently or actually, when the reign of God is fully established. In that time in which the renewed creature "flourishes in an incorruptible state . . . [and] the new man remain[s] continually, always holding fresh converse with God," resurrected humanity will still be "soul receiving the Spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God."²⁸

Contra Valentinus and Simon, Irenaeus sees in the shepherd the Divine Word, whose incarnate descent does not pry souls free, but recapitulates and repairs wayward humanity, body and soul. The cause for rejoicing is the shepherd's descent, the decisive revelation in Christ that God fulfills his commitment to creation and to those who will be recalled to perfection in his image and likeness. If his understanding of the parable is more compelling to us than that of his opponents, we have only been reminded of the fact that a theology forged in a controversy long past has left its marks on the most fundamental ways in which we think as modern Christians.

Before his brilliant career ended in 253, Origen's work as theologian and Biblical scholar had come to the attention of educated Christians and pagans far beyond his native Alexandria and Caesarea in Palestine, where he lived after running afoul of his bishop in 230. In his capacity as theological expert he served as consultant and arbiter, travelling to churches troubled by disputes over doctrine. Equally expert in philosophy, he attracted some non-Christian students, though his reputation as a vigorous proponent of the view that Christianity was the only ultimately true philosophy made him a central disputant in the sharp arguments exchanged by pagan and Christian theologians.

Among the vast number of problems and projects which occupied him, Origen sought, with no less intensity than Irenaeus, to challenge and expose the ideas of the gnostics as innovations and departures from the faith of the apostles. In the preface of *On First Principles*, his ambitious attempt to build "a connected body of doctrine," Origen's description of the God of Scripture and the apostolic teaching is counterposed to gnostic speculations: God is

27. *Ibid.*, 5.8.2.

28. *Ibid.*, 5.36.1 and 5.6.1.

one, the creator God, both just and good (against Marcion's contention that a vengeful God reigns in the Old Dispensation, a loving God in the New), whose Word, Jesus Christ, came to earth and was incarnate, truly (not seemingly) undergoing birth, suffering, and death before his triumphant resurrection. With the Father and Son, the Holy Spirit is "united in honor and dignity."²⁹ These assertions, produced and refined through conflict with gnostic teaching and outlined in the "Rule of Faith," provide the fundamental bases and boundaries, the "first principles" of Origen's theology. In his case, these essentials of faith do not resolve all questions, but make possible those explorations which seek to unlock mysteries of God's purposes in and for the universe.

It would have been impossible for Origen, an Alexandrian, to be immune to those instincts and energies which rewarded gnostic Christianity with an early following and broad popularity in Egypt. Some have claimed, in fact, that Origen's anti-gnostic theology is itself gnostic in its essential structure and objective, and is only adjusted in its particulars to avoid violation of the "Rule of Faith."³⁰ The partial truth of that claim derives from the fact that when antagonists fight "in close" it is precisely the shared ground (the modes of conceptualization and language held in common) which heats discussion into polemic. In theological, as in other dealings, agreement over what matters (e.g., the question of being "lost" or "saved") is just what makes disagreement so volatile.

It is the attention which Origen devotes to questions concerning the soul which seems to place his theology (and his handling of the parable of the lost sheep) somewhere in the territory which stretches between Irenaeus and the Valentinians. Amid his clear anti-gnostic declarations on the identity of God, he raises his version of the problem, still unanswered, which had vexed and then inspired gnostic teachers and seers:

In regard to the soul, whether it takes its rise from the transference of the seed . . . or whether it has some other beginning, and whether this beginning is begotten or unbegotten, or at any rate whether it is imparted to

29. Origen *On First Principles*, Preface. Quotations from this work are from the edition of G. W. Butterworth (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

30. For the view that Origen's "system" bears closest resemblance to that of the gnostic theologians, see Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1934) II, 1, pp. 171-233. If one is searching for extra-biblical influences in Origen's theology, a stronger case can be made for his dependence upon basic Platonic themes, as Hal Koch argued long ago in his masterful *Pronoia und Paideusis* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1932).

the body from without or no; all this is not very clearly defined in the teaching [i.e., the teaching delivered by the apostles].³¹

From such wonderings emanated Origen's vision—a proclamation of God's saving "economy" and an account of the universe's origin and destiny. In a timeless beginning, he wrote, God begot as many pure minds as he could serve as sovereign, intending for them a life in beatitude, a life of basking in his love. Exercising their freedom as rational beings, these minds departed from the Father (either through emulation of Satan, the first rebel mind, or because they became sated and grew weary of adoration and contemplation of the divine). As the minds fell, they cooled into souls, assuming shapes and degrees of materiality determined by the distance they chose to put between themselves and God, the source of their life and enlightenment. In this way the created order came into being, populated by spiritual beings of fine substance (planets, stars, angels) or grosser (humans and the animal species) who were distributed throughout the universe in "different ranks of existence in accordance with their merit."³² For Origen the visible world in its beauty and harmony revealed a design and cohesion imposed by a benevolent creator; the same world in its distorted and tragic aspect gave testimony to liberty badly misused by intelligent beings. In this cosmos of free choice and willing relationship God coerces no one, and no one's choice of good or evil is determined beforehand.

No one is stainless by essence or by nature, nor is anyone polluted essentially. Consequently, it lies with us and with our own actions whether we are to be blessed and holy, or whether through sloth and negligence we are to turn away from blessedness to wickedness and loss.³³

Origen's creator God is dedicated to the regathering of this universe of tumbled souls, who by their own decisions have surrendered their "first natural and divine warmth."³⁴ To these dulled intelligences he sends his Word and Reason, a divine beckoning to his rational offspring. The invitation will extend through cycles of worlds, if necessary, and to Satan himself, who was "once light, before he went astray."³⁵ When, finally, resistance is softened by God's chastening therapy, the restoration (*apokatastasis*) will be complete.

31. Origen *On First Principles*, Preface.

32. *Ibid.*, 1.6.2.

33. *Ibid.*, 1.5.5.

34. *Ibid.*, 2.8.3.

35. *Ibid.*, 1.5.5.

Origen's vision of God is many things at once. It is a scientist's explanation of the multiplicity and diversity of the cosmos, and a theologian's proclamation of a God who desires reunion with his progeny. It is also the myth and gospel Origen the believer recites in hope, because mirrored there as a fact and promise is the end of his estranged condition, the termination of his unclear vision of who he is and to whom he belongs. In it is recounted God's commitment to win back through persuasive love every willful and self-destructive soul who has been given life.

The mark of Origen's theology, its structure and intent, can be detected in several of his references to the story of the lost sheep.³⁶ Even after his teaching has been softened by Rufinus (his translator who also sought through revision to protect him against accusations that some Origenist doctrine was heterodox), the edge of Origen's own thinking is not missing from these pieces of exegesis:

. . . of a hundred sheep, one had been lost, but the good shepherd, leaving the ninety-nine on the mountains [and] coming down to this valley of ours, the valley of tears, searched for this sheep, found it and carried it back on his shoulders, and rejoined it to the number of those who had remained safe in higher places.³⁷

The appearance of a detail from the Matthean form of the parable appears to be purposeful: the sheep are not left in the wilderness (as in Lk. 15:4, *en tē erēmō*), but "on the mountains" (according to Rufinus' translation, *in montibus*, reflecting Mt. 18:2, *epi ta orē*). The suspicion that this feature serves the vertical emphasis of Origen's scheme, i.e., the descent and ascent of souls, is corroborated by another passage in his *Homilies on Joshua*. Addressing the leadership of the Church, he asks if the shepherd (bishop) can watch the little sheep rushing to the precipice of damnation in the world without calling out. Have you forgotten your prototype, he asks, who,

. . . leaving the ninety-nine in celestial places, came down to earth for the sake of one small sheep which had strayed, and found it, put it on his shoulders, and took it back to the heavens?³⁸

36. Not discussed here is Origen's argument for the unity of the church in his *Homilies on Jeremiah*, fragment 28. There he finds the text pointing to the fact that Christians are one body and one sheep. The shepherd's coming was for the purpose of binding the faithful together, and carrying them as one sheep to his realm.

37. Origen *Homilies on Numbers* 19.4 (translation by author).

38. Origen *Homilies on Joshua* 7.6 (translation by author).

With the disclosure of another piece of information—the lost sheep is humankind, the ninety-nine are angels—the outline of Origen's treatment of the similitude is clear.³⁹ Equally clear are the ways in which his theology is his own. Neither Helen, nor an Aeon of any other name, nor soul-fragments destined by their nature to receive *gnōsis* are the objects of the divine retrieval. It is mankind that God searches out: enfleshed souls meant to be minds in spiritual bodies, humans capable of joining the ranks of angels, free rational beings intended to respond to a higher calling. The determinism and elitism of gnostic religion are under direct attack.

On the other hand, operating in thoughtful but bold independence of certain themes of judgment and eschatology familiar to us in New Testament writings as well as Irenaeus' theology, Origen sets no limit of time or worlds upon God's saving patience. And he is unwilling to designate any creature a doomed goat—even Satan will be restored, converted at the last by the divine affection, "in order that God may be all in all."⁴⁰

Little has been said to this point about the savior featured in this drama of restoration. It was in answer to Celsus, defender of the pagan Gods, not to the docetism of the gnostics, that Origen spoke in specific terms of the nature of the shepherd. Against the Christian idea of incarnation, Celsus reasoned that if God descended to man, he underwent change "from good to bad, from beautiful to shameful, from happiness to misfortune, and from what is best to what is most wicked."⁴¹ To this sort of change true deity is not susceptible, as anyone minimally versed in philosophy should know!

Adapting the ideas of the "Christ-hymn" in Phil. 2 to meet this challenge, Origen speaks of the Divine Word who remains what he is while taking upon himself the limitations of humanity. So "the advent of Jesus to men was not a mere appearance, but a reality and an indisputable fact."⁴² Origen chides Celsus for his inability to understand the different forms or aspects (*epinoiai*) in which the Word appears. He manifests himself in a "form corresponding to the state of the individual, whether he is a beginner, or has made

42. *Ibid.*, 4.19.

39. We learn from Rufinus' *Apology* 1.38 that Jerome drew this idea of the meaning of the passage from Origen.

40. This is the logical implication of Origen's several references to 1 Cor. 15.28 in *On First Principles*. Rufinus' endeavor to obscure the unpopular universalism of Origen's theology was unsuccessful.

41. Origen *Against Celsus* 4.14. Translations from this work are from the edition by Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

a little progress, or is considerably advanced, or has nearly attained to virtue already, or has in fact attained it."⁴³ These modes of revelation were necessary because rational beings, having defected from God, were unable to gaze directly upon the radiance of the divinity. Finally,

... because of his great love to man, God made one special descent in order to convert those whom the divine scripture mystically calls 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' which had strayed down from the mountains; in certain parables the shepherd is said to have come down to them, leaving on the mountains those which had not gone astray.⁴⁴

Here began the "new thing," the Christian commotion which Origen defended against the criticism of Celsus and all his companion conservers of the custom and piety of the Empire.⁴⁵ The apologetic proceeds: surely the church could not be increasing in numbers, and there would not be such pervasive evidence of morally-improved lives if all this were not unfolding in accordance with the providential design. God's "one special descent" in the incarnate word released into the culture forces for change and reform which cannot be mistaken, nor ultimately resisted. But the commotion is no mere civil disturbance, according to Origen—it is the earthly signal that in Jesus Christ God is stirring his own citizenry throughout the universe and recalling them to their "first natural and divine warmth" in his presence.

3. The Fallen Sheep: Room in the Fold?

The story of the lost sheep had its part to play, as we have seen, in early Christian struggles to identify the deity and to define the salvation being claimed by believers. As a vehicle for doctrinal expression and a weapon for polemic, the parable proved its versatility. But use of this text was not restricted to questions of dogma and right belief. There were also lessons to be drawn from Jesus' similitude which bore directly upon the self-definition of the church and upon standards of Christian morality.

A single episode highlights the ways in which the parable was employed to buttress sharply conflicting ecclesiologies and ideas of discipline within the community of the redeemed. Sometime around the year 210, the severe African churchman, Tertullian,

43. *Ibid.*, 4.16.

44. *Ibid.*, 4.17.

45. *Ibid.*, 8.43. See note 1.

learned of an edict issued by the bishop of Carthage.⁴⁶ It read: "I remit, to such as have discharged [the requirements of] repentance, the sins of adultery and fornication."⁴⁷ Tertullian's response was a scathing treatise entitled *On Modesty*. He viewed the episcopal decision as a betrayal of the sanctity required of the baptized. "Why do they . . . grant indulgence," he complains, "under the name of repentance?"⁴⁸

Some of the theological and scriptural arguments advanced by supporters of the decree are visible in Tertullian's biting attack. There is no reason to believe that they disagreed with his view that Christians should commit no serious sins after their baptismal renunciations. But they insisted that the divine mercy was not to be withheld from those members of the community who falter, provided they undergo the discipline of public penance required for readmission to communion.⁴⁹ A policy branded by rigorists like Tertullian as moral leniency and defilement of the virgin church looked altogether different to them. It was faithful enactment of the purposes of God, who reveals himself in holy writings to be merciful and slow to anger, more desirous of a sinner's repentance than his destruction. The sons of God, they reasoned, were to be like him in mercy and peace-making, not judging others, lest they be judged.⁵⁰

There are forceful and ingenious points in Tertullian's rebuttal. He views with outrage the presumption of human authority to speak for God, who alone is able to pardon sinners. The God of Christians, he reminds his opponents, is not merciful in some sense which negates his justice. This is why Isaiah warns that God's patience has an end, and St. Paul can envision the necessity of surrendering a person to Satan for damnation.⁵¹ The demand for righteousness stands clearly in the Decalogue, and Tertullian finds

46. On the debate over the dating of Tertullian's *On Modesty* and the long-popular view that Callistus, Bishop of Rome, was responsible for the edict, see T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), pp. 44-8, 247.

47. Tertullian *On Modesty* 1.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Tertullian had earlier endorsed the practice of *exomologēsis*, as we know from his *On Repentance* 9-10. There were two new factors when he composed *On Modesty*: (1) Tertullian had joined the spirit-filled Montanist church, and now adhered to the ethical rigorism of the community of the "New Prophecy" and (2) the edict, as he argued, attempted to reclassify irremissible sins (Cf. 1 John 5.16) as pardonable.

50. Tertullian *On Modesty* 2. Among the texts used for support are Ex. 34.6-7; Ezek. 18.23,32; 33.11; Lk. 6.36; Mt. 5.9; 7.1.

51. *Ibid.* References are to Isaiah 42.14 and 1 Cor. 5.5.

the relation of the prohibition of adultery to the prior commandments concerning idolatry and Sabbath observance suggestive, "for after spiritual chastity and sanctity followed corporeal integrity."⁵² This integrity was not possible when mankind was "in Adam," but since the incarnation of the redeemer, it lies within the power of those reborn "in Christ," not of "the slime of natural seed, but of 'pure water' and a 'clean spirit.'"⁵³

Tertullian's work is not finished. To justify their compassionate decree, his opponents have pointed to the parables in Lk. 15. The import of the parable of the lost sheep is, for them, unambiguous: "sheep," "flock," "good shepherd" are designations well-known among Christians, and the saying of Jesus clearly concerns "a Christian who has erred from the church's 'flock'."⁵⁴ The interpretation was not at all unfamiliar to Tertullian. A decade earlier, before becoming a Montanist, he himself had offered the proof of God's clemency in Lk. 15:3-7 for the consolation of the lapsed Christian, and as incentive to undertake second repentance while the door of forgiveness remained slightly ajar.⁵⁵

All is changed by the time he challenges the edict of the Carthaginian episcopacy. Fired by the spirit of the "New Prophecy," he is compelled to drop a plumb line in the midst of the corrupt life of catholic, or as he calls them, "psychic" Christians (the term "pneumatic" he reserves for his fellow Montanists). The theology and exegesis by which these intemperate church members flatter God and indulge their carnality cannot go unchallenged.

This zeal for purity in the church produces a striking interpretation of our parable. Tertullian's starting point is an exegetical principle which sounds curiously modern. He demands that the actual setting of Jesus, rather than any subsequent allegorical or symbolic application, control the meaning of the text. Jesus' parable was an answer to a specific, historically-particular question. He was not speaking to or of Christians. They did not exist at the time. Jesus was answering the complaint of the Pharisees:

[They] were muttering in indignation at the Lord's admitting to his society *heathen* publicans and sinners, and communicating with them in food. When, in reply to this, the Lord had given the similitude of the restoration of the lost ewe, to whom else is it credible that he likened it but to the lost heathen, about whom the question was then at hand? . . . [And] in order

52. *Ibid.*, 3.

53. *Ibid.*, 6.

54. *Ibid.*, 7.

55. Tertullian *On Repentance* 7-8.

to express, in opposition to the Pharisees' envy, his own grace and goodwill even in regard of one heathen, he preferred the salvation of one sinner by repentance to theirs by righteousness. . . .⁵⁶

His treatment of the parables of the lost coin and the prodigal follows the same principle. It is illegitimate to turn the parables to purposes and persons other than those which Jesus addressed. His opponents identify the recovered sheep with the lapsed Christian in order that "they may endow adultery and fornication with the gift of repentance."⁵⁷ But Tertullian insists that the historical sequence must be preserved. Christians were made out of heathens, being first "lost" and then carried back to God by the savior. The hermeneutic in this case is dictated by the writer's vision of a pure and obedient community of saints. Sound interpretation of Jesus' parable, then, will not allow the original saving event—the redemption of the lost sheep from "the universal nations"—to be made a warrant for cheap grace dispensed to (and by) Christians who strike compromises with the world too easily.

Neither Tertullian's exegesis nor his rigorist definition of the church won dominance in catholic Christianity. His views lived on in "pure-church" sects and reform movements. For most Christians, the trials and temptations met in the plain business of living required a different conviction and hope. The majority of believers sought the assurance that to their distorted and disobedient lives the good shepherd continued to descend, and that, in the end, rejoicing in heaven might be over their repentant faith.

Our past is richer and much less predictable than we suspect. There may be other inferences to be drawn from this telescoped study of a single parable in a brief segment of the Christian community's story, but this one is inescapable. The parable of the lost sheep did not always mean what moderns may contend it means, any more than the people of the church always understood themselves in the ways of understanding we have devised for our time. It may not be true that there was greater diversity and variety in Christian belief and practice in the patristic age than in the present, but it seems unlikely that there was less!

An encounter with the ideas of Simon, Irenaeus, and the rest may push our current perspectives out of shape in a refreshing way, if only momentarily. Perhaps it is always worth the trouble to

56. Tertullian *On Modesty* 7.

57. *Ibid.*, 9.

ask again, in particular ways, whether theological and ecclesiastical (and for that matter, political) traditions triumphed as orthodoxy because they were self-evidently sound, or whether we regard them as sound because we are products of the traditions which triumphed. One is reminded of Ray Bradbury's story, "The Sound of Thunder," in which big-game hunters, thanks to a time-vehicle, safari backward in time, stalking *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Because one of the party clumsily slips in that former world, and destroys a butterfly, the hunters return to a different present—one in which a more graceless language is spoken and a more sinister government holds sway. All has turned out differently.

Behind our most cherished contemporary understandings, contested or unchallenged, there stands a long story of decisive and subtle turnings. Whatever modern sense we make of the parable of the lost sheep can only be enriched by a sharper consciousness of the places we have wandered and the many ways our rescue has been celebrated.

Biblical Perspectives on Human Sexuality

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"More Pre-teens Want Birth Control Advice," "New VD Strains Proliferating in U.S.," "Teenage Motherhood Within Months of Marriage Rising"—these recent headlines point quite clearly to the continuing need for Christian churches to take seriously their responsibility for sexuality education and to get involved in this area, especially on the local level, where the greatest effect is likely to be obtained. That problems related to sexuality are among the most pressing faced by our society today is hardly questionable (not only with respect to youth but also for more and more adults), yet local churches seem incapable of facing the problem squarely and often merely continue to voice the traditional "don'ts" without presenting anything approaching a convincing case for their views.

Such a case must in some way take into account contemporary biological, psychological, and sociological findings about human sexuality if it is to speak cogently and convincingly to people today. We must realize that it is not "copping out" to consider current data. The Christian Church is called upon to be responsible to and for (and therefore to speak *understandably* to!) the world in which it exists, and to do this it must use the language and knowledge of that world. Without a thorough familiarity with the results of recent research and a careful evaluation of these findings in light of traditional wisdom, the Christian in our scientific culture will always be at an immediate and automatic disadvantage to the person who can cite the latest "scientific" support for *his* view (whether he really understands what he is citing or not).¹

1. I have attempted such an examination and application of recent biological and psychological research in a book (as yet untitled) to be published by Fortress Press in March, 1977.

But if the churches are to have more to offer than other agencies or individuals speaking about sexuality today,² if the churches are to develop a viable "theology of sexuality" to guide Christians and (one would hope) society at large in this confusing area—indeed, if the churches are to carry out their necessary task of articulating God's will for humanity—then their teachings must be firmly rooted in the Biblical material which is the ultimate source for the Christian Church. Without these roots (and it may not be far wrong to say that the true "radical" in the area of sexual ethics today is the person who is willing to acknowledge and hold to these *roots*!) the churches stand to lose a great deal. First and most clearly, the churches' uniqueness, identity, and, in a crucial sense, their very "soul" will be forsaken. Second, the many valid and desperately needed insights into human sexuality which the Bible contains will not be heard. Finally, as a result, the churches will lose the ability to contribute anything of real and lasting value in this crucial area. In short, the churches will become simply another voice in the rising cacophony, a voice which many are predisposed to ignore anyway, especially when they see that the churches are really only trying to find a theological justification for the latest hypotheses of psychology or statistical summaries of sociology.

Of first priority, then, is the attempt to wrestle seriously with the Biblical material concerning sexuality and to discover ways in which this material can speak to us in a world radically different from that in which the Bible was written. There are, of course, many specific aspects of human sexuality which are quite controversial today: The question of homosexuality (or at least the ordination of homosexuals) rages within United Methodism; the movement to forbid abortion by means of a constitutional amendment—largely the effort of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops—has recently gained new impetus through the support of such diverse Protestants as the Reverend Jesse Jackson and Billy Graham's wife, Ruth. Since I clearly cannot deal with all such specific issues here, I have decided to limit my consideration to a fundamental and presuppositional issue, namely, the *nature* and *purpose* of

2. See, e.g., *The Pleasure Bond: A New Look at Sexuality and Commitment* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), by the famed sex researchers William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson (in association with Robert J. Levin), for an excellent contemporary presentation of many of the "traditional" religious teachings about sexuality from a physiological-psychological viewpoint. These two researchers, whom many associate with the "dehumanization" of sex and the spread of sexual freedom, instead come down very strongly on the side of *commitment* and *fidelity* as necessary for full sexual pleasure and fulfillment.

human sexuality itself as presented in the Bible. By doing this, I think information will be provided which any Christian can incorporate into his or her view of sexuality and which can serve as a foundation upon which to base considerations of the many questions of sexual morality which currently face us. Although all avenues for furthering our knowledge should be explored and taken into account, the Bible must remain as the informing and guiding source for *Christian* theological-ethical reflection.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament contains a great many references to sex and sexual behavior, and of necessity I have been highly selective in the passages to be examined. Only the Genesis creation accounts and the Song of Songs will be considered for their contribution to an understanding of the Old Testament attitude toward sexuality.

The Genesis Creation Accounts

An understanding of human sexuality is intricately interrelated with an understanding of man in general; any attempt to uncover the roots of the Biblical view of sexuality must take into account the broader question of the nature of man. Nowhere in the Old Testament is this interrelationship more clearly depicted than in the creation stories of Genesis, and to these accounts we will devote a major portion of this investigation of the Old Testament view of human sexuality.

The first three chapters of Genesis, as is well known, contain two accounts of the creation of man: the first, 1:1-2:4a, from the Priestly or P source (put in its final form ca. 500 B.C., although it contains much older material); and the second, 2:4b-3:24, from the Yahwist or J source (written ca. 950 B.C., making it the oldest narrative source in the Bible). For the sake of convenience, we will consider the stories in the order in which they occur in the Bible.

Perhaps the most significant point to be found in both Genesis creation stories, especially in light of traditional Christian interpretations, is the unquestionable affirmation of *human sexuality as good*, as God's willful intent for human existence. It is clear from a reading of the very first chapter of Genesis that the Old Testament faces the question of sexuality directly, as a basic fact of creation to be accepted, not hidden: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; *male and female he created them*. And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it' " (1:27-

28a, emphasis added). By presenting man's creation as male *and* female, the Priestly author assured that human sexuality must be seen as neither a mistake by God nor the consequence of man's sin, but as part of God's intention and therefore a meaningful aspect of human existence; indeed, in some sense man's sexuality participates in his creation in God's image.³ The crucial point is that sexuality is presented as fundamental to what it means to be human and thus must be taken very seriously.

Furthermore, when God had completed his creative work, "he saw *everything* that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (1:31a, emphasis added). This judgment of "very good" was pronounced on *all* of God's handiwork, *including* the sexuality of man, and such a view makes impossible for those in the Judeo-Christian tradition a belief in metaphysical dualism (which views the material world and human body as inherently evil). In addition, it is important to note that God's *first* words to his new creatures are a command (also characterized in the text as a *blessing*) to exercise the sexuality he has created: "Be fruitful and multiply." Thus there is no suggestion that sexuality is the result of man's sin or that child-bearing is in any way a punishment—human sexual activity and procreation are part of the creation that God judged to be "very good."

Also, in this story, it is clear that the "image of God" refers neither to the man alone nor to the woman alone, but only to the two of them together, to the "them." It is significant further that the male and the female are created simultaneously with no hint of temporal, much less ontological, superiority for the male, and that the blessing of fruitfulness and dominion is delivered to both male and female together. In short, P makes clear that both man *and* woman were necessary for the completion of God's creation of mankind; not only did both have to be created, they had to be brought together in what was explicitly a *sexual* relationship in

3. Although it has been effectively obscured by the traditional misinterpretations, the J account clearly corroborates P's unequivocal statement that God intends sexuality from the beginning, that he chooses deliberately to make man a sexual being: In Gen. 2, both male *and* female (and therefore by definition sexuality!) are intentionally created by God before any hint of sin, of whatever kind, enters the picture.

order to fulfill God's purpose for those creatures whom he had created "in his own image."⁴

These themes of the goodness of sexuality and the necessity of the male-female relationship appear also in the J creation story, though the language and mode of presentation are much less theological and abstract and more personal and detailed. Throughout the P account, every act of Creation is judged "good," with the entire creation (including man's sexuality) characterized as "very good," as we just saw. The only place in the whole presentation of creation where the judgment "not good" is pronounced is Gen. 2:18b: "It is not good that the man should be alone." We see here corroboration of P's contention that man by himself is less than fully human, that he needs another in order to reflect truly God's image and to fulfill God's purpose. And this other is *woman*, the only companion really "fit for him." For J as well as P, true humanity exists only in community, and the fundamental form of this community for both authors is the relationship between man and woman. Again, sexuality—man's existence as male and female—is strongly affirmed as a central element in God's intention and plan for mankind.

The reason given by J for the creation of woman—that the man should not be alone—is also important to our inquiry. Given the Hebrew emphasis on procreation (a central element in the P story), it is significant that J stressed man's *loneliness*, his need for a companion worthy of him, as the immediate reason for woman's creation. Furthermore, there is no mention at all of children in this particular story, indicating that God's creation of sexuality was to serve purposes other than just procreation (this, incidentally, is a good example of the need to consider Biblical passages in their overall context and not to lift out certain passages or emphases—the procreative element of Gen. 1 needs the stress on companionship of Gen. 2 for balance and for an accurate picture of God's intention in the creation of sexuality). J apparently was interested in explaining why a man and woman forsook blood ties (of in-

4. It is crucial for an understanding of sexuality rooted in the Bible to recognize, in Helmut Thielicke's words, "the fact that here the Bible does not speak first of the creation of man in general and then *afterwards* of the difference between the sexes, but rather from the very outset speaks of man only in the framework of the polarity of the sexes." For the Priestly author "there is no such thing as a human being apart from a man or a woman." See *How the World Began: Man in the First Chapters of the Bible*, John W. Doberstein, trans. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 89.

comparably greater importance in his time) and entered into a relationship with each other based on a love even stronger than that of a child for its parents. J found his answer in the fact that the power of eros, the inextinguishable drive of the sexes for each other, was given to man by God himself in the creation of woman from man (cf. "Therefore" in v. 24). According to Gerhard von Rad, this fact "gives to the relationship between man and woman the dignity of being the greatest miracle and mystery of Creation."⁵ Furthermore, this eros is presented not as appropriate only in Paradise and certainly *not as a result of sin*, but as a permanent law of nature, based upon the clear statement that in the creation God intended not only the existence of man as male and female but also the desire of the sexes for each other, and apparently not solely for procreative purposes.

Because of the traditional misinterpretations, it is important to consider the implications of the J story for the status of women. As we saw, P makes no distinction whatsoever between male and female in terms of importance and thus indicates that God did indeed create them equal. J, because of the temporal priority assigned to the male's creation, has usually been interpreted as implying thereby an ontological superiority also.⁶ But it is not unreasonable to suggest, on the contrary, that the whole story seems to build to an intended climax in the creation of the woman, whose elaborate creation is in marked contrast to the relatively perfunctory creation of the animals (and even of the man himself!).

Furthermore, it is significant that the words translated by the RSV as "helper fit for him" (the infamous "helpmeet" of the KJV) actually have a considerably different connotation in the original Hebrew: Their literal meaning is "alongside him" or "corresponding to him," with the notion of similarity as well as supplementation. The New English Bible offers perhaps the best translation of this concept in simple English: God provides "a partner for him." It is crucial to note that it is only *after* the sin of disobedience—when the state of existence God had intended for his creatures had

5. *Old Testament Theology*, I, D. M. G. Stalker, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 150.

6. This same argument, if applied to the P account, would of course mean that "every living creature that moves" (not to mention light, the seas, vegetation, etc.) is superior to man since they were created first; and in the J story itself the human female would have to be seen as inferior to all the rest of the animals. Not surprisingly, however, those who are eager to apply such reasoning to the male-female relationship in J are much less willing to be consistent and apply it to P and to the female-animal relationship in J as well.

been disrupted—that woman is seen as subordinate. Gen. 3:16—often cited as proof of the divinely ordained superiority of the male—is actually a condemnation of it (after all, it is itself in the context of a curse, not a statement of how things should be!): The dominance/subservience model is clearly a *result* of the “Fall,” with its disordered relationships, and therefore not God’s will but the very thwarting of it. Thus, whatever the traditional interpretations of this verse, it appears that J considered the original state of creation (and of woman’s place within it) to have been somewhat different, though since disturbed by sin.

Having mentioned the Fall, I feel obligated to look briefly at this story which has been the source of so much misunderstanding about the proper Christian attitude toward sexuality. The traditional (mis)interpretation of Gen. 3 goes roughly as follows: Adam and Eve did not know about sex until *after* eating of the tree of “knowledge of good and evil,” which knowledge is therefore associated with the consciousness of sex, which automatically brings with it the sense of shame that the two humans experienced as soon as “their eyes were opened.” This interpretation, however, is highly unlikely for several reasons, only two of which can be mentioned here.

First, the equation of “knowledge of good and evil” with consciousness of sex implies that the lack of shame about being naked means that the first couple were not conscious of their sexuality. Such a position assumes that sexuality itself occasions shame by its very nature (once one is aware of it). But this suggests that sexuality was *not* part of God’s intention for humans in creation, whereas we have already seen that *both* creation stories consider sexuality to be a purposeful part of God’s good creation, with no indication that sexual experience was jealously withheld from Adam and Eve. Second, it is clear from the temptation story that God (or members of his heavenly court) possessed the “knowledge of good and evil.” This in fact was the serpent’s argument for eating the forbidden fruit, in order to be “like God, knowing good and evil” (3:5), and it appears that such knowledge was the result (cf. 3:22). But one of the distinctions of Hebrew religion was, as Martin Buber once put it, that its God was “supra-sexual,” creating merely by divine will rather than by sexual coupling with a female deity. Thus it is very hard to see how the “knowledge of good and evil”—a specific possession of God in this story—could possibly have been sexual experience or consciousness, as the traditional view has held.

An interpretation of the story which is more consonant with Hebrew attitudes toward sex, especially as they are presented in Gen. 1 and 2, would hold that the sin of the first couple, far from being sexual in any sense, was one of *pride*, of overstepping the limits God had placed upon them as finite creatures (symbolized by the forbidding of the one tree) and attempting to become "like God." The Bible throughout considers pride to be the root and essence of all human sinfulness, and here we have a graphic depiction of the first instance of man's attempt to set himself up as his own "center of value," of his refusal to accept his finiteness and limitations. Thus the "knowledge of good and evil" does not mean sexual awareness or experience; rather it is a symbol for the knowledge of everything, for omniscience in the widest sense, a quality which, unlike sexuality, Hebrew religion *did* attribute to its God. "Good and evil" was used in the morally based Hebrew culture as the two extremes of existence between which everything falls, much as we in our intellectually based culture might say, "He knows from A to Z."

The consequences of this prideful attempt by the first couple to usurp God's place were naturally the sundering of their relationship with God (symbolized by their expulsion from the Garden) and the subsequent disordering of their relationship with the rest of nature and with each other—the woman became subservient and the man dominant, neither a healthy position to be in and neither God's original intention for the male-female relationship. A further and not surprising result of these disrupted and disordered relationships was shame, which is *not* meant to be sexual at all here (though our society is so obsessed with sex that we tend to equate shame with sex automatically); rather, "nakedness" is a powerful symbol for having one's weakness exposed, a sign of shame and dishonor, of helplessness and vulnerability before a more powerful and righteous authority. Shame, in short, is a response to being unmasked, to being, as we would say, "caught in the act." Thus the point which the Biblical author wanted to convey by his use of the image of "nakedness" would be better understood today (and with far less detriment to Christian views of sexuality) if Gen. 3:7a were translated, "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew they had been caught *with their pants down!*" The imagery is the same, but the point is much clearer to us.⁷

7. Perhaps one explanation for the traditional misinterpretation may be found in the Genesis story itself: It is impossible for us to imagine sexuality without some sense of shame precisely because we live in the disordered state after the Fall!

The Song of Songs

Overall, then, there is little question that the view of human sexuality presented in both creation stories of Genesis is positive and affirmative, asserting that God intended man to be sexual and in fact blessed and commanded the use of sexuality. There are numerous other illustrations in the Old Testament of this understanding of sexuality as a good part of God's creation, but space limits us to a consideration of what is surely the pre-eminent example, the most explicitly sexual book in the Bible, namely, the Song of Songs. Although the scholarly problems concerning this book are numerous, enough consensus has emerged that we can draw several conclusions important to our study.

The weight of current scholarship supports the view that the book is most clearly a loose collection of lyrics with no theme other than love between the sexes and no purpose other than praise of this love. God is not mentioned in it and it contains no hidden moral; only by the greatest injustice to the text itself can the Song be allegorized into a depiction of the love of God for the Church or of Christ for the soul. Yet the Song of Songs *is* a sacred book with a deserved (though often overlooked) place in our canon. The reason for this is that to the Hebrew sages who preserved the Song there was no distinction between the "sacred" and the "secular" such as we make today—religion pervaded *every* aspect of life. The Song of Songs is secular, therefore, only by our modern definition, which makes a facile distinction totally alien to the mentality of those who preserved the Song. Although God neither appears nor is mentioned in it (which makes it "secular" for us), for the Hebrew sages he is not absent from the Song, nor are his love and concern for his creatures unmanifested in it. Rather they are clearly shown in the enjoyment and pleasure (given by God to man in the creation) which the lovers find in each other and in their surroundings. Although this view may strike us as strange and somehow "un-Christian," it is a direct result of the presentations of creation in Genesis and the later Hebrew development of the notion of God's inseparability from and total involvement in all facets of his *good* creation, including man's sexuality.

The Song of Songs was preserved in the tradition, then, precisely because the sages did not distinguish between writings which explicitly mention God (i.e., the "sacred") and those which do not (i.e., the "secular"), even if the latter deal vividly and forthrightly with sexual love. Since God created everything, everything speaks of his love for his creatures if used as he intended. The relation-

ship of man and woman (including its attendant pleasures) was thus seen as an indication—perhaps one of the clearest indications—of God's love and concern for man. Sexuality expressed as God intended is one of man's greatest joys, and any God who would purposefully give his creatures the source of so much pleasure and enjoyment must surely be good and loving.

The Song of Songs is significant to us precisely because it reminds us of a central fact of Old Testament thought too often overlooked today, namely, the goodness of *all* creation, including man's body and his sexual nature. The Old Testament stresses that sexuality is a *normal* part of human existence, to be accepted as a gift from God and therefore to be celebrated and not denied. Sex itself is not sinful, contrary to later interpretations: Man can sin with sex, as he can with money, power, or any number of other things; but when he does, it is *man* who sins, not some alien, demonic force over which he has no control and therefore for which he has no responsibility.

For the Christian, it is of course necessary to ask how these Old Testament ideas were applied and developed in the New Testament. With the background we have now gained of the Old Testament attitude toward sexuality, we can examine some of the major teachings on this topic of the two dominant New Testament figures.

The New Testament

Jesus

After the abundance of statements in the Old Testament about the nature and purpose of human sexuality, it may be somewhat surprising to discover that the New Testament is relatively silent on the topic. Although there are certainly other reasons, both theological and historical, for this puzzling lack of attention, one of the most obvious is that the New Testament is in organic continuity with the Old, and the New Testament writers (and those written about) were mostly Jews, who had been brought up in the traditions and teachings of the Old Testament. Thus, where the actors and authors of the New Testament were basically satisfied with what the Old Testament taught, they did not bother to elaborate on that particular topic. For them the Hebrew scriptures were their "Bible," and Jesus himself clearly asserted his adherence to the sacred writings of his fathers (cf. Mt. 5:17). Even in his most scathing attack on the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus condemned only their *failure* to live up to the law, and he urged his followers to

"practice and observe whatever they tell you," i.e., the law (Mt. 23:3).

On the other hand, it is quite clear from the Gospel records that Jesus thought that he was inaugurating God's earthly reign (Mk. 1:15), within which he apparently felt free to appeal beyond the human *interpretations* of God's law to God's primordial will as originally intended in creation. Christian theology thus asserts that the work of Christ consisted in carrying through, fulfilling, the will of God; that Jesus so understood his mission is shown by the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount. The Christian, then, must listen carefully whenever Jesus claims to be stating God's true will for man.⁸

The importance of this point becomes immediately apparent when we consider Jesus' teachings about marriage and divorce, the prime sources for discerning his understanding of human sexuality. In Mk. 10:2-9, Jesus asserts that, whatever the current situation, God *created* man male and female so that they could come together in marriage, a physical union in which "they are no longer two but one flesh." This Semitic idiom indicates a merger of complete personalities, not just physical bodies. And this union, since it was God's *original* intention for man, is to be permanent; only because of man's disobedience and disordered relationships was this not the case. Since God's will was that the one-flesh union be indissoluble, for Jesus divorce was, in the deepest sense, literally impossible, and remarriage therefore necessarily constituted adultery. Far from disparaging marriage, then, Jesus implies a very high view of the sanctity and permanence of the sexual union between husband and wife, a view which we could well benefit from recapturing. Incidentally, it is significant to note, especially given the traditional stress of Judaism on procreation, that Jesus appears to emphasize in all his statements about marriage the unitive, relational aspect rather than the procreative.

Another of Jesus' teachings sheds further light on his view of sexuality. In the famous teaching on adultery (Mt. 5:27-28), Jesus points out that in lust, as in adultery, the *created purpose* of sexuality—to allow a man and a woman to unite in the most intimate of relationships—cannot be fulfilled, and the object of lust remains just that, i.e., an object to be used to gain the self's own satisfaction

8. The question of the direct applicability to our problems today of these appeals of Jesus to God's original will in creation is greatly complicated by the fact that we live in the "fallen" times, after Jesus' preaching but *before* his *parousia*, and not in the time of the original creation.

without regard for the other's needs. Jesus thus implicitly denies the use of a woman (or a man) as a mere "sex object" at the same time that he stresses once again God's original will for sexuality. Since in lustful desire as such the *physical* act is not yet committed, the decisive factor is the will or intention. Clearly for Jesus, then, sex involves much more than the physical merging of bodies if the mere wrong desire is as open to condemnation as the wrong act.

It should be noted that in this passage Jesus surely was not condemning the natural, involuntary, transitory sexual impulse, a perfectly proper aspect of human sexuality as created by God. His concern was rather twofold: first, that one not deliberately keep oneself in a prolonged state of desire for another that represents the actual wish or intent to commit the act, deterred only by lack of opportunity; and second, that the object of one's sexual impulses be appropriate—this is shown by the use of the phrase "commit adultery," which implies that the "woman" mentioned is *not* a legitimate partner. There is certainly no condemnation of proper sexual expression. It is hard to believe that these two verses could have been understood so often to indicate an anti-sex bias on Jesus' part and to encourage celibacy, but such are the vagaries of Biblical interpretation.

Biblically speaking, the *family* may be seen as both the proper context for and the result of the sexual relationship, and Jesus' positive regard for the family has been implicit in his teachings on marriage, divorce, and adultery. On the other hand, there are a number of sayings of Jesus which appear to degrade and even threaten the family (e.g., Mt. 10:34-49, 12:46-50; Lk. 9:59-62, 14:25-27). These sayings, however, share a fairly commonly accepted explanation which is consistent with Jesus' positive valuation of the family elsewhere.

There is considerable scholarly agreement that the central theme of Jesus' preaching was the coming of the kingdom of God (cf. e.g., Mk. 1:15 and Mt. 6:33), one of the major features of which was the absolute sumpremacy of its claims upon the believer (cf. Mt. 13:44-45). A careful examination of the passages under consideration here indicates quite clearly that Jesus is *not* advocating the denial of family ties or the natural relationships of life, nor is he saying that in order to follow him one *must* cease to feel natural affection for relatives. He is simply saying that *if* conflicts arise (as he realized were likely), the demands of the kingdom must come first.

In these "hard sayings," then, Jesus is not disparaging the family and thus, by implication, the sexual relationship; rather, he is set-

ting priorities that must be observed by those who follow him: If need be, everything must be given up for the kingdom, even family ties, and one must recognize the kingdom's greater claim that only those who do God's will are the true relatives of Christ. Indeed, far from demeaning the family, Jesus implicitly acknowledges the high regard he held for the mutual affections of the family by using family relationships in these examples of God's absolute claim upon us. He says in effect that when God demands it of us, *even* family ties—even those bonds of affection that should be dearest and most meaningful to us and the strongest on earth—have to be set aside. This is the *ultimate* sacrifice for the kingdom, on a par with giving up one's very life.

Although all the evidence cannot be presented here, it is important to make several summary remarks about Jesus' attitude toward women. In a culture in which women held a subordinate, subservient place, Jesus must have stood out for his radical attitude toward them. For Jesus, a woman was a person, a human being, an individual of equal worth with men before God, and she was to be treated accordingly. This view is illustrated by his assertion of the "one-flesh" indissolubility of marriage—precluding treatment of the wife as mere "property"—and even more clearly by his actions with regard to women: He healed them, conversed with them, taught them in spiritual matters, and allowed them to accompany him on his journeys (none of which was approved behavior in his culture).

Despite the low social and cultic status of women in his time, Jesus addressed them as equals before God, i.e., as they were *meant to be* originally by God in creation and are meant to be ultimately in redemption. As the "New Adam" (Rom. 5), Christ serves as God's agent in reconciling all humans—male and female—to himself and thus to each other. He reverses and corrects precisely what happened in the Garden and overcomes the disruption of the relationship between God and the man and woman and the consequent disordering of their own relationship. As we have seen, God's will seems clearly to have been that the two should exist in harmonious equality as one, and Christ, as the agent of redemption, restores the original intent of God in creation, of which he was also the agent (1 Cor. 8:6). Since Christ as Redeemer ushers in the "new creation," therefore, we have the hope that within a Christian framework there will once again be the proper ordering of sexuality as intended by God in the original creation.

Finally, we must consider briefly what has probably been the most taboo topic in the history of the Church, namely, the sexuality

of Jesus himself. In the traditional interpretation of the later Church, Jesus has been represented as an asthenic, non-emotional, "innocent" celibate who was far above anything so base as sexual feelings. With such a picture of the "model" for human life—the "most authentic man"—it is little wonder that the Church has had so much difficulty dealing in a positive, affirmative way with sexuality. Only two points can be made here in response to the traditional view.

First, Jesus was a Jew who, so to speak, lived in the Old Testament, and he would therefore most likely have held the overall worldview—including the attitude toward sexuality—of his tradition. This assumption is amply attested by his affirmation of marriage and of the proper expression of sexuality already presented; thus we can be fairly confident that Jesus indeed shared the Old Testament's healthy, affirmative view of sex and marriage. Second, if the cardinal doctrine of orthodox Christianity, the "fundamental Christian truth" in Brunner's words—the Incarnation—is to be valid, Jesus must have been a sexual being. If Jesus were "truly man" and "like us in all things" (as the Chalcedonian Creed puts it), then clearly he possessed a sexual nature and experienced sexual feelings. Jesus' humanity is demonstrated throughout the Gospels, especially in his expression of the very human characteristics of fatigue, thirst, hunger, anger, sorrow, love, and pity. To deny *sexual* feelings to Jesus solely on a priori grounds based on one's own preconceived notions is to tend dangerously toward the Docetic heresy and a Manichaeian dualism, both of which are inconsistent with orthodox Christian doctrine. The Gospels do not tell us how Jesus may or may not have manifested his sexuality, but if he were truly human, by definition he *was* sexual.

In summary, then, Jesus' teachings that pertain to human sexuality reveal a healthy, affirmative attitude, as would be expected in someone of his background. He held marriage in high esteem as the divinely created pattern for the man-woman relationship, and he affirmed the importance of women within God's creation, not just for their child-bearing ability but as unique individuals worthy of respect and consideration in their own right. Though some of Jesus' statements appear to disparage the family and sexual relationship, these are explained by Jesus' demands for the absolute supremacy of the Kingdom of God in one's life. Finally, if one is to affirm the doctrine of the Incarnation, it must be clearly stated that Jesus himself was a sexual being, although from the available evidence we are unaware of the ways in which he may

have expressed his sexuality. Admittedly, our records of Jesus do not provide a great deal of information about sexuality, but what they do offer is overwhelmingly positive, and there is no hint at all of any disparagement of this crucial aspect of man's being.

Paul

The apostle Paul, on the other hand, is often considered to hold a basically negative view of sexuality and to advocate celibacy as the "true Christian way." Clearly we must come to terms with the thought of Paul—whom many consider to be more important in the formulation, and certainly in the spread, of the Christian faith than Jesus himself—if we want to reach a viable understanding of sexuality that is rooted in the historical documents of Christianity. At the outset, we can say of Paul what we said of Jesus: As a strict Jew (Gal. 1:14), Paul could be expected to have inherited the views of his community, and he clearly relied heavily on the Hebrew Scriptures (as did Jesus) for his understanding of God's will for man. It is also important in understanding Paul's statements about sexuality to keep in mind that, unlike most current theological-ethical writing, the only extant records we have of Paul's ideas are occasional letters, written hastily to particular congregations, usually with particular concerns in mind. This is especially evident in Paul's most extended treatment of sexuality, 1 Corinthians 6-7, to which we will turn for an examination of Paul's thought on the subject.

Although often seen as indicating a negative view of sex, 1 Cor. 6 clearly shows that Paul's interest lay with urging the *right use* of a God-given gift. The entire chapter, far from disparaging sexuality, presents Paul's exceptionally high view of it—a view that was based primarily on his belief that sex was created by God to serve a unitive function for man and woman, uniting them in their *total* beings and fulfilling both. Paul was extremely sensitive to offenses against this relational function (such as transitory encounters with prostitutes) and used as his fundamental sanction God's redemption and ultimate resurrection of man's body through the saving work of Christ. Since the body was the "temple of the Holy Spirit," bought at the cost of Christ's death, it was not to be defiled by the *immoral* use of that body—nothing negative is said about the use of one's body as God intended. Sexuality is one of man's most powerful and therefore most important gifts from his Creator; it is the *misuse* of this capacity, not sex itself as created by God, that offended Paul and called down his judgment. Sexuality must be

used rightly, and it is to this question that Paul turned in 1 Cor. 7, in which he addressed a group of Christians who seem to have had ascetic leanings.

1 Cor. 7 is the part of Paul's writings most often cited as indicative of his negative view of sex and marriage, and he does clearly express a preference for the single state; but he does not seem to recommend that the single remain so because of any inherent evil in sexuality or inferiority in marriage. In fact, he expressly *forbids* the married to become single, which one might expect if he viewed celibacy as intrinsically superior. Paul's preference for the single state can be explained most adequately and brought into harmony with his overall positive valuation of sexuality if one notes his very strong eschatological expectation of the imminent return of Christ. In fact, there are two eschatologically motivated thrusts to Paul's recommendation not to marry: first, that Christians should be totally free in the short time remaining to serve the Lord as Paul himself was (vv. 32b, 34b); and second, that unmarried persons would be spared anxieties about spouses in the end-time (vv. 28b, 33, 34c). But even though "the form of this world is passing away," Paul insisted that both men and women had the right to marry if they so chose (v. 28a).

A further refutation of the claim that Paul had an anti-sex bias is found in 1 Cor. 7:3-4. Here, instead of commending ascetic practices in marriage (as one who grudgingly allowed sex only for its necessary procreative function would be expected to do), Paul explicitly forbade them, except for brief periods when *both* partners agreed to abstain for devotional purposes. He thus extended the "one-flesh" concept of marriage to the absolute equality and mutuality of the partners in conjugal relations. By demanding the surrender of authority over one's body to one's spouse, Paul recognized the right of each partner to personal satisfaction and fulfillment in the marital relationship. This principle is quite surprising given general first-century attitudes, and it is certainly alien to the popular picture of Paul.

There is more to marital coitus than just physical gratification, however, as illustrated by the extraordinary view of v. 14: Since for Paul marriage necessarily includes coitus (cf. vv. 3-5), he seems to be saying here that the union of two in one flesh—the highest expression of human sexuality when it occurs within the deep and total relationship that is marriage—is of such a nature that a believer can bring about the religious sanctification of a nonbelieving spouse. In a sense, then, Paul considers coitus (and thus human

sexuality in general) to be "sacramental," to be a channel through which the material is used to bring about spiritual results—in this case, the sanctification of the marriage partner.

Although Paul's attitude toward women has been very influential in Christian history, here we can only assert that his view was not altogether negative but quite paradoxical. On the one hand, he felt very great affection and appreciation for the women of his churches, and it seems safe to assert that no confirmed misogynist would have been likely to have so many female friends and trusted coworkers or to have spoken so highly of them (cf. e.g., Rom. 16:1-2, 6). On the other hand, as a product of his cultural heritage, Paul clearly stated the prevailing view that women should be subordinate (cf. especially 1 Cor. 11:3-16). Indeed, Paul often struggled with his Jewish background as it was confronted and challenged by his Christian faith, and his tradition sometimes won, especially on specific points such as dress in church and social roles. But when it really mattered, in his general theological statements, the power and truth of the gospel he preached came through. Thus he was able to write Gal. 3:26-28, whose words we could well benefit from taking to heart:

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

In Christ's inauguration of eschatological unity (i.e., his restoration of God's original intention), sexual as well as cultural and economic differences are to be transcended. But it is clear that Paul did not imply any disparagement of sexuality by this statement because it is characteristically a *religious* affirmation. That is, it refers to the equal dignity of all before God and the equal availability of salvation to all. As Robin Scroggs has put it, "*Distinctions* between groups remain. *Values* and *roles* built upon such distinctions are destroyed. Every human being is equal before God in Christ and thus before each other."⁹ In short, if in God's eyes, according to Paul, all humans are of equal worth, can we as Christians strive for anything less?

To recapitulate briefly, throughout this examination of primary Biblical sources for an understanding of human sexuality, two major themes have emerged. First, the Old Testament attitude is

9. "Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XLII (September, 1974), p. 533.

decidedly positive, as illustrated by the depiction of sexuality as a willful intention of God in his good creation and by the celebration of its appropriate expression in the Song of Songs. Jesus reflects this view in his teachings, echoing the Old Testament concern that this God-given gift be used *properly*. Neither the Old Testament nor Jesus suggests at all that sexuality should not be expressed because of some inherent evil attributed to it. As for Paul, his view of sex is also basically positive, even when he recommends not marrying in 1 Cor. 7. He certainly indicates his awareness of the possible abuses and temptations of sex (as did the Old Testament and Jesus), but this is no more than a recognition of its power and importance and not any denigration of sexuality per se. There may indeed have been an ascetic bent in Paul personally which was absent in his tradition, Jewish or Christian. When he wrote as theologian and ethicist, however, Paul transcended his own personal proclivity for the sake of the theological truth he wrote to maintain.

Second, it seems clear from both creation stories in Genesis that God's original intention was that the male-female relationship be one of basic equality and harmony, an intention that was thwarted by man's prideful disobedience. Jesus was consistent with this viewpoint in his attitude toward and treatment of women—not surprisingly, given his frequent appeals to God's primordial will for guidance. Even Paul, whose practical statements present a more ambivalent attitude toward women, in his theological statements strongly reaffirms the equality of all persons before God through the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The Christian Church thus has a very positive and relevant foundation in its Holy Scriptures for its desperately needed task of proclaiming a view of human sexuality which is consistent with God's intention when "he created them male and female."

The Bible in Worship

by ROBERT T. YOUNG, M.Div. 1960, *Minister to the University*
and HELEN CROTWELL, *Associate Minister to the University*

Shortly after participating in a service of worship in which there was no direct Biblical reading or specific scriptural reference, the person responsible for the service was asked about the place of the Bible in Christian worship. The answer was unequivocal, "The Bible is essential to worship." Then a pause, and with some shock, "But I didn't use it at all." It would be rare to find any person objecting to the primacy of the Bible in worship. The Bible is a given, is basic, is fundamental to Christian worship.

The Christian faith presupposes a central place for the Bible in services of worship. The assumption is that the foundation for Christian worship is the Word of God found in the Old and New Testaments. But this principle is easier to verbalize than to actualize. The use of the Bible in worship consistently demands serious attention and hard work. It is not unusual to observe that the use of the Bible in a service of worship seems to be an after-thought; or the preacher may use fascinating linguistic gymnastics to connect the Biblical word to the preached word.

Corporate Christian worship is the gathering of the Church as a community, to stand intentionally in the presence of God to be renewed, to become aware of sin—to acknowledge it and claim it—and then receive forgiveness, to hear the Word of God, to respond to this word, and individually and corporately to become agents of God's healing, redeeming, reconciling love in the world. Liturgy is the public work of the people of God.

Corporate worship assumes a community which also gathers at other times, especially to study and to plan. When this happens, the people gathered for worship are more prepared because of their shared common life. When this does not happen, especially when there is no gathering of the community for study, the proclaimer of the Word must bear more responsibility as teacher.

The Duke University Parish Ministry (DUPM) has become aware of a renewed interest in Bible study. There is a serious quest by some students for a method of study which will include the advantages of two types of Bible study which have been characterized as "the academic" and "the individualized." The first method places major emphases on the factual material—author, time, place, historical situation, and variations in text; the second, on the meaning the word has for the individual, directly, with little regard for the historical context of the writing or of its relationship to today's world. We will continue the quest because we believe that persons who participate in Bible study and then worship together bring to worship an additional understanding and preparation for the worship experience. They see liturgy as the work of the gathered people of God, in contrast to seeing liturgy as a time for persons to sit passively, watching.

One of the goals of DUPM is to provide a diversity of opportunities for corporate worship. This diversity is in response to the pluralism of religious views of the Duke University community. Two of the major factors which inform and shape our liturgies are the Christian traditions represented at Duke and current theological/ethical questions. These two factors inform the content and style of the services. In these liturgies several elements of worship are held in tension: the tradition of the Church, the Bible (used explicitly or implicitly), current personal and community realities impinging on those who gather to worship.

Here are examples of how these factors shaped the liturgies. At some times an ancient rite of the Church will be used. This year, for example, the University community was invited by the Catholic Chaplain A. J. O'Brien, S.J., to participate in the Candlemass, which includes a procession of the faithful with lighted candles to commemorate the entry of Jesus the Christ, the Light of the World, into the temple at Jerusalem. The Candlemass was first practiced by the Franks in the fifth century. There are times of the Church year or University year when a specific part of our liturgy will be highlighted, such as the penitential and confessional dimensions of the Ash Wednesday worship. At other times there will be an experimental form of liturgy. For some services people gather for a time of preparation, dividing into sub-groups which take responsibility for various parts of the service. All are given the scriptural Word as the basis from which to work.

Two central experiences in the liturgy, the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist, find their origin in and are developed out of the Biblical word.

In all of the liturgies the Old Testament and New Testament provide resources for the different parts of the service: the words of praise, the confession of sin, the words of forgiveness and the assurance of pardon, the act of dedication, the sending forth into the world, the text for the hymns and anthems, as well as the focus for the proclaimed Word.

The selection of the Biblical passage is often determined by the liturgical year. There are many useful ancient and contemporary lectionaries, such as the one found in the Book of Worship of the United Methodist Church, or the one used by the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal Churches, which is in a three-year cycle.

In a university community the academic year is often celebrated in a service of worship, such as at the opening and closing of the year and at graduation. When preaching on a special University occasion, the preacher is dependent on his/her knowledge of scripture and the relationship of the Word to the event of the day. This is often very difficult to do with integrity to the Word and to the occasion.

The more traditional approach to Biblical exposition—the preached Word or the sermon—is still most frequently used as the method of proclamation. However, even in the formal setting of the eleven o'clock Sunday Worship in Duke Chapel, new ways to use the Bible have been introduced. On Palm Sunday a group of dancers under the direction of Mrs. Dot Borden interpreted Psalms 131 and 133 from Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*.

In preparation for writing the sermon some preachers invite members of the congregation to join in discussing the scripture text and the projected sermon material. Other ways of using the Biblical Word that are being tried in Duke Chapel include:

1. The reading of a contemporary or ancient writing often illustrates, informs, or focuses the scriptural word. An example is the Genesis story of the Garden of Eden and Kafka's *A Report to the Academy*. Connecting the two is a setting forth of the Garden of Eden story so that the connection with the Kafka story can be made upon a first hearing by the congregation.

2. The reading of the scriptural word may be followed by a poetic restatement of the Word interpreted through movement. Heather Elkins, a Divinity student, wrote such a work as her inter-

pretation of the Martha and Mary story. Two women, Nancy Rosebaugh of the Divinity School and Ann Dunn, a graduate student, "bodied forth" the word through dance. This particular communication had a very powerful impact on the worshipping community.

3. After the reading of a Biblical passage, the text is placed in context and given a brief but sharp focus by the leader of worship. The worshipping community is then invited to make verbal responses to the lessons. The interpretive statement helps direct the discussions and keeps the comments pertinent and helpful. Such a discussion is strengthened when the community has studied and reflected on the passage before the time of worship.

4. Using the same basic approach as above, the community's response can be meditation directed by a series of provocative statements and questions. These ways of using scripture encourage the congregation to become involved actively in worship. The liturgy then becomes the work of the people.

Some people will intentionally come to a special or experimental service of worship, such as some of the above. But most people do not want to be surprised or shocked by the unexpected. Such an experience may limit their ability to worship. Thus we try to indicate what the characteristic features of our services will be: "Informal Worship," "Non-Sexist Liturgy," "Celebration of the Eucharist," "Worship in Duke Gardens." People are informed ahead as they rightly should be.

The role and status of women within the Church and society is of critical importance for the Church today. How we deal with this issue affects the Church as a worshipping community very directly in two areas: first, with regard to the ordained ministry; second, with regard to the use of masculine language and images in the liturgy.

Some men and women who understand and appreciate the primary importance of the ordained ministry's being open to women see the question of language as a peripheral and diversionary concern. There are other men and women who believe the use of language to be very important, and they are committed to work seriously and conscientiously to develop liturgies which are non-sexist in language use. We have felt that it is most important that women not feel excluded from worship because of sexist language. The negative effects of sexist language may be both immediate (at the moment of worship) and long-term (developing or sustaining

sexist images in children or others). We have found that there is already a deep reservoir of theological words (Biblical and traditional) which express the faith in non-sexist terms. To use such terms is a continuing affirmation of the centrality of the Bible and of tradition and re-affirms the inclusive nature of the Church. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." We try to use non-sexist language and deal with scripture and with contemporary needs with both compassion and integrity.

Some parts of the service can be made non-sexist by careful thought, genuine concern, and intentional word selection. Our experience has been that the prayers and the sermon can be made non-sexist in language without negative or harmful effects, but, in fact, can have very positive, affirming, and inclusive effects. Some of the changes in using non-sexist language have been difficult to develop or painful to experience, and have brought some sharp and hostile reactions. There is a continuing struggle to be open to God's Spirit as this Spirit directs us in these changes, and to be continually sensitive to those who do not care to change or for whom worship is disrupted by such change. We feel this struggle is consistent with the word of scripture, appropriate to the needs and hurts of many men and women in our community, and well worth enduring in order to let the Word continue to come alive in our midst. Persons leading worship in Duke Chapel are given instructions in leading worship which include the following request:

"In your leading of the service, we ask you not to use terms which refer to God only in masculine terms. We have found, as you would know already, that there are way to address God in personal terms which do not use the masculine pronouns—(O Holy God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, O Loving God, You). However, some people prefer using both male and female pronouns—Parent, Mother/Father, He/She. So we ask you to use whatever is most comfortable for you and yet is non-sexist and inclusive in meaning."

Many churches and communities are developing books of worship and hymnals which will be inclusive in language.* This development is being made in ways in which inclusive language facilitates rather than inhibits the worship of the congregation. But since any change in liturgy may cause some discomfort for the worshipping community, we who lead in worship will need to plan the services and its distinct elements on the basis of our understanding of the demands of the gospel.

The Bible is central to Christian worship. We take seriously this basic presupposition. Our experiences in the use of the Bible in worship in the Chapel have been exciting, helpful, illuminating, disturbing, demanding, changing, but consistently rewarding and enlightening. God's Word is continually revealing itself to us in new and creative ways. We are grateful for the interest and commitment of our worshipping communities here in the Chapel and for the new and deepening experiences we have shared. Our experiences with the Word the past two and one-half years in the Chapel give us continuing hope and promise for more richness and understanding in the future. The Bible *is* central. In this affirmation we rejoice!

*A sub-committee of the Baltimore Task Force on the status of women in the Church (Roman Catholic) has published a *Liturgy for All People*. The following instructions are given concerning the use of scripture:

- 1) If the Scripture of the day calls for a passage with sexist attitudes, there are two viable alternatives:
 - a. Substitute another passage.
 - b. Explain the passage carefully, e.g., Paul's cultural conditioning, the assumptions of that era.

Do not use a sexist passage without explanation.

- 2) Readings—Read the Scriptures in sexually balanced language. Just as we have adapted scriptural language to change archaic usages to modern phrases, so it is proper to insert sexually balanced language.
- 3) Prayers—Use sexually balanced language. e.g. Not “pray brothers” but “pray brothers and sisters.”
- 4) Be sensitive to major forms of sexist language in the church. Sexism toward God—even though written in masculine dominated cultures, the Scriptures show a Yahweh of great range and vitality. Both feminine and masculine characteristics were attributed. It is appropriate to use both masculine and feminine terms to refer to and speak about God. Jesus was obviously a man. The Spirit is a person. Both masculine and feminine attributes are appropriate. The Spirit may also be referred to as an indefinite person.

Book Reviews

Anatomy of the New Testament: A Guide to Its Structure and Meaning. Robert A. Spivey and D. Moody Smith, Jr. Second edition. Macmillan, 1974. 539 pp. \$10.95.

One of the gifts bequeathed to us by the general education movement was the modern American college textbook: a comprehensive introduction to a large field which distinguishes the major points, ignores the rest, and provides instant interpretation, thus saving the student the need to retain what he has learned and discover its significance over a short career of learning if not a longer lifetime of reading. The general education movement has long since vanished, but the textbook, while frequently declared dead or at least senile, seems to survive quite well. In many subjects it appears all but indispensable, and has become a staple item. This now appears to be the case for the field of New Testament interpretation. A series of excellent books has come from publishers in recent years, indicating that the books are a routine part of the publishers' repertoire, the courses for which they are intended a routine part of college, university and seminary curricula.

It is curious that so many superior examples of the genre should be associated with professors of New Testament at Duke University. Franklin W. Young is joint author (originally with Howard Kee, now also with Karlfried Froelich) of *Understanding the New Testament* (3rd ed., 1973); James Price has written *Interpreting the New Testament* (2nd ed., 1971); and W. D. Davies published *Invitation to the New Testament* in 1966. Perhaps it was inevitable that Moody Smith should lay full claim to his New Testament position at Duke University by writing, with his fellow Duke and Yale alumnus Robert Spivey (The Florida State University), *Anatomy of the New Testament*. Inevitable or not, was such a book justifiable? The answer is obviously yes. I say obviously not only because *Anatomy* (1969) is already into the third printing of its second edition (1974), but also because Spivey and Smith have written a different kind of book, one which has a distinctive tone and rationale which will appeal to many teachers and students. It is deservedly successful.

Success in this realm is a subtler matter than might at first seem the case. After one has solved the problem of scope ("How much of the New Testament shall we read?") and found the appropriate literary style (neither too breezy nor too pedantic), picked the illustrations (those in this volume are particularly welcome because so many are contemporary and Eastern) and found the proper level of exposition (one cannot suppose the reader knows anything—given the demise of general education—save how to be indignant if addressed as somebody who knows nothing), success might seem to be within grasp. But it will elude all but those who discern and solve the final riddle: How can you keep a book which has mastered all these other tests from being inherently more coherent, readable, and attractive than the text it seeks to introduce? The great liability of even (especially?) good textbooks for New Testament interpretation is the likelihood that they will be abused by students and teachers alike who will let what started out as an aid to understanding become the text to be understood. Since the primary text itself is craggy, full of little puzzles and sometimes a bit obscure, the temptation is obvious. Spivey and Smith, however, are going to keep their readers honest.

They begin with the usual background information ("The World of the New Testament," pp. 5-74) on cultural and religious affairs in Judaism and the larger Greco-Roman world. The first major division of the book (pp. 77-248) comprises a study of the synoptic gospels and their picture of Jesus. One chapter is devoted to each gospel, beginning with Mark, which itself is introduced by a compact rehearsal of the synoptic problem and the basic perspectives of source, form and redaction criticism.

For each gospel the authors provide a short outline or sketch of the anatomy of the work, followed by headnotes dealing with specific literary and historical problems. The initial outline makes clear which divisions of the gospel are to be dealt with in detail in the subsequent exposition, and which sections will be dealt with more summarily. Thus, for example, the book provides a rather thorough exposition of Mt. 1:1-2:23; 3:13-17; 5:17-20; 16:13-23; 18:15-22; 21:28-46 and 25: 31-46. In doing so, it sets these passages in their wider context, but also elicits from them what the authors regard as the most fundamental or evident components of Matthew's overall interest, which they describe as "A Radical Obedience." At the conclusion of the chapter the authors use their initial outline of literary structure to check the results of their more detailed exposition or exegesis. Do the parts contribute to what was initially described as the whole, and does the whole help guard against the danger of one-sided emphasis of some parts?

The results, I find, are unusually satisfying. The student is not given a series of vague generalizations or lists of detached observations, but quite specific texts which have been treated at some length and yet set in wider contexts which shape specific interpretations. Most important, the textbook becomes an organic extension of the text rather than a summarized substitute for it. To read the textbook itself is to deal seriously with the text, yet doing so requires no previous introduction to the problems of New Testament interpretation. Furthermore, reading the textbook invites reading the New Testament.

Concluding this redactionally-oriented treatment of the synoptic gospels is a chapter designed to move beyond the limits imposed by such a literary approach and provide "A Portrait" of "Jesus the Messiah" (ch. 5, pp. 182-248). Here Spivey and Smith seek to correlate a basic understanding of three areas in the synoptic gospels—Jesus' miracles, his teachings, and his death—into a single, reasonably unified and comprehensive portrait. Problems inherent in such an effort are only magnified when the intended audience is as broad, faceless, and heterogenous as a textbook's audience must be. What is even more important than the results, because basic to the results, is the set of criteria and principles by which judgments will be made in assessing the various texts. In *Anatomy* these criteria and principles are reasonably clear. Two seem primary: the Church's picture of Jesus, which supplies our gospels, is continuous with the historical figure, but not identical with him in his setting; and the various elements of his portrait will satisfy normal demands for coherence.

In Part II ("The Early Church and Paul," pp. 249-375) we are given a chapter on the Acts of the Apostles ("Witnessing to the World," pp. 253-287), and two chapters on Paul. The first of these ("Paul: Apostle and Man of Faith," pp. 288-335) introduces some basic details of Paul's career through introductory notes, and then turns to exposition of a series of central texts from I and II Corinthians, Galatians, I Thessalonians, Philipppians, and Colossians. The texts chosen for discussion are arranged according to topic and deal with the apostle personally, with the concept of freedom in his gospel, and with the polemical issues which Paul and his message both encountered and engendered. The concluding chapter of this section provides an analysis of Romans ("Paul's Exposition of the Gospel," pp. 336-375) which is concentrated on chs. 1-12, as might be

expected, and goes about as far as one can in making Paul's views both accessible and internally coherent.

In Part III ("The Church and the World") the principle of selection has been those texts which best illustrate the dilemmas of a young movement in, but not of, the world. Chapter 9 (pp. 380-423) concentrates on the notion of the church itself in its post-Pauline development as evidenced in Ephesians, I Timothy, James, I Peter and Hebrews. The concluding chapter of this section ("Overcoming the World," pp. 425-87) deals with John's gospel (1:18; 9:1-41 and 17:1-26) as well as I John and Revelation. The authors do an excellent job in showing the inner coherence which still makes the blanket term "Johannine literature" seem to mean something, even while they set out clearly the difficulties facing any traditional view of common authorship.

Concluding the entire book is a brief resumé (pp. 491-7) which rehearses the actual structure by which the analysis of the New Testament was undertaken, itself a matter of taking structures, literary and historical, quite seriously. The concluding coda of each chapter attempts to provide a comprehensive view of the material which has been analyzed. The coda of the entire book makes the same sort of effort for the entire New Testament, and reinforces the consistent effort made by the authors to concentrate on specific NT texts and then help the student place such specifics into a gradually expanding, coherent frame of reference.

Supplementary aids, such as endpaper maps, have come to be virtually mandatory in such texts and are included in this one. The glossary at the end (pp. 498-506) is very well done and the bibliographies have had more than routine care given to them. In addition to bibliographical information at the end of each chapter, in an intelligently selective and annotated fashion, the entire book concludes with bibliographic annotations under eight categories ranging from "NT Texts" to a bibliography on bibliography, with helpful stops at the history of primitive Christianity, history of criticism, New Testament theology, etc., along the route. The subject index is acceptable, although in a book of this sort the greater the detail the better, always remembering that one's standards for indexing go in inverse proportion to one's responsibilities for compiling one. The Biblical index is particularly useful. From the point of view of craftsmanship the second edition seems to me somewhat more spartan and less pleasing than the first. Some errors remain to be expunged: "climatic," p. 84; "amoung," p. 215; "changes," p. 295; "It it," p. 451. "Adaption" on pp. ix, x is a word unknown to me, and while it seems a clever hybrid, we can probably continue to survive without it. On p. 454 the word "paragraphing" is barbarous, but not incorrect. Seasoned form-critics will want to separate Smith (Sm) from Spivey (Sp) in style and content. It can be done, but the overall level of uniformity and readability is quite high, some few transitional paragraphs being the most notable exceptions.

In summary, it is evident that this book has already made its place among other books performing a similar task. This is because it has its own distinctive excellence which is a genuine departure from earlier patterns of NT introduction for colleges and seminaries. The scheme is not a gimmick, but a productive and mildly coercive approach to textual interpretation which, like John the Baptist, is quite clear about what is primary and what is secondary. *Anatomy of the New Testament* introduces the New Testament itself clearly and in such a way that it drives the student right into that book's central themes, problems and realities.

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U.N.C.-Chapel Hill

Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament: A Structuralist Approach to Hermeneutic. Dan O. Via, Jr. Fortress. 1975. 179 pp. \$8.95.

When a friend of mine in graduate school at Yale was asked by Professor Kenneth Scott Latourette about the subject of his Ph.D. dissertation, he replied that he was writing on humor in the Old Testament, to which the venerable Latourette snorted and commented: "Well, you certainly won't find much humor in the New Testament." Piqued by this response, my friend went on to expand his dissertation to include the New Testament.

Interesting as this anecdote may be, it has really nothing to do with Dan Via's most recent book, which is about the relationship of the New Testament to comedy as a type of drama and to what he calls comic genre. In no sense does it deal with humor, and it is certainly not very funny. Via belongs among the vanguard of those who are attempting to apply the insights and methods of the structuralist movement to the interpretation of the New Testament. His present work is nevertheless also an extension of the same hermeneutical interests which motivated his earlier book on the interpretation of the parables (*The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension*, Fortress, 1967) and of his efforts to apply to the New Testament the kind of literary criticism practiced outside the guild of Biblical scholarship.

Via's book is divided into four chapters: "A Structuralist-Literary Approach to New Testament Hermeneutic," "Paul and the Comic Structure," "Approaching the Gospel of Mark," and "A Structural Analysis of the Markan Narrative." It deals on the one hand with the general question of the nature of structuralism and its relation to New Testament interpretation and on the other with the structural analysis of specific Pauline texts and the Gospel of Mark.

Structuralism, as Via points out, does not have to do with the formal structure of various types of texts.

Rather "structure" refers to "the hidden or underlying configuration that can offer some explanation for the more or less visible or obvious pattern in the text" (p. 7). The structure of a text or document is not contained by it. The text belongs to the structure rather than the other way around. The structure is inferred or constructed from texts, but the structuralist is committed to the proposition that the structure is in some significant sense prior to any specific manifestation of it. Via, in working from several NT texts, hopes "to construct a structure which will be a system of transformations or variations which *contain* [italics mine] these and other possible texts, which will disclose the kinds of relationships between the texts, which will not simply be a common denominator, which will be something other than the texts themselves onto which they can be projected but a something of which they will seem like realizations, and which therefore will provide a basis for assessing the meaning of the texts" (pp. 9-10).

Via discerns (and constructs) a comic structure or genre into which certain typical NT texts may be placed and within which they may be better understood. Hence the book's title. This genre is not only common to certain Pauline texts (e.g. I Cor. 1:18-2:5; see p. 42, fig. #2), but also, broadly speaking, to the Gospel of Mark and a number of Markan texts. Crucial to Via's structural analysis is the kerygma of Christ's death and resurrection; it is fundamental both to Paul's theologizing and to Mark's narrative, which culminates in the passion. The kerygma finds its counterpart in the death and resurrection theme of ancient Greek religion and derivative Greek drama. All belong to or participate in a common comic structure or genre. This commonality, i.e. common structure, far from detracting from the uniqueness of the Christian message allows that message to come to expression and to be heard. Via can call the comic genre "a deep structure of the mind" and "a basic

sense of human life."

At this point we may observe how Via's use of structuralist method differs from the disciplines of *Religionsgeschichte* (comparative history of religions) and form criticism. Unlike the former it presupposes or hypothesizes no necessary historical connections or relationships between or among the phenomena or documents in question (i.e., Paul's letters, Mark, Greek religion and drama). Such a relationship is perhaps undemonstrable and in any event not required for the purposes of structuralist analysis. The similarity is explicable as the expression of a common genre. But this genre is not analogous to the various forms or genres identified by form criticism (e.g. controversy stories, miracle stories, birth narrative, pronouncement stories, etc.). In fact, the same structuralist genre may be found in texts which form criticism differentiates precisely on the basis of, among other things, formal structure. Thus such formally different texts as a miracle story, a controversy story, and the entire Gospel of Mark participate in the comic genre.

Structuralism is no more congenial with redaction criticism than with form criticism or *Religionsgeschichte*, for redaction criticism as a method also views texts as products of historical processes rather than as things in themselves.

Via contends that redaction criticism characteristically fragments the text into tradition or source and redaction in a manner utterly foreign and unnatural to the reader. People do not read by taking texts apart in that way. Moreover, it frequently has recourse to hypotheses about the setting and causes or motivations behind the text that are in the nature of the case highly problematic.

In conclusion, a few critical observations. The use of structuralist method implies theologically buying into a view of reality and the human mind which may be tantamount to a special form of natural theology. This is not necessarily bad, but the Biblical exe-

gete should at least be aware of this, as Via in fact is. Thoroughgoing structuralist method in the interpretation of Biblical texts could lead to the denigration of their historical and denotative dimensions. Via is aware of this and does not himself disparage those dimensions or the methods pertinent to them. It would be his contention that structuralist interpretation brings out other aspects of texts, which also illuminate the historical dimension. The process of structuralist interpretation involves the formation of syntagms and paradigms (graphic models) and the construction of grids into which allegedly common elements of texts are made to fit. As Via acknowledges, some element of uncontrollable subjectivity is involved in this procedure. There is always a danger that such "grids" may become procrustean beds into which texts are forced.

Via's book is doubtless intended to initiate and facilitate discussion of structuralist interpretation of the New Testament. It should do just that. While it may perhaps produce as many questions and objections as fruitful exegetical insights, it is nevertheless a welcome and timely contribution to the hermeneutical discussion.

D. Moody Smith

The Literature of the Bible. Leland Ryken. Zondervan. 1974. 368 pp. \$7.95.

There is "blowing in the wind" (to coin a phrase!), a yearning among some persons in the area of Biblical studies for some new methodology which will release the study of the Bible from the burden of sterile scholarship; a new method that will take into account and help to unleash the power of the Biblical message. One of the directions this search is taking is in the area of a literary approach to the Biblical records. By literary is not meant the historical-critical methodology which so many of our students, both past and present, have learned, but literary in the sense that the Biblical books are approached

as literature and examined as one would examine any literary work as to type of literature (comic and tragic), plot motifs, and other considerations such as these which aid in understanding the meaning and message of the writing.

Most of the impetus for this movement, so far at least, has come from outside the field of Biblical studies, mainly from persons in the area of English literature. The present author, Leland Ryken, is an English professor. Some other works have appeared (and may be of interest to our readers) such as Helen Gardiner, *The Business of Criticism* (Oxford), and a newly edited book from Abingdon Press, *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (ed. by R. R. Gros Louis, with J. S. Ackerman and T. S. Warshaw, 1974). To this latter volume Professor Ryken has also contributed, and the reading of that article is strongly recommended.

According to Ryken, literature is experiential but "not only presents experience but also interprets it" (p. 13). Literature is "... an interpretative presentation of experience in an artistic form" (p. 13). The point is that too often Biblical scholars have failed to understand that the Bible is a collection of books each of which expresses the emotional and experiential dimension of the writer or editor. And each of these works falls into one of the categories of literature.

Using as a basis the concept of the "archetype," Ryken examines various Biblical stories. The archetype is "... a symbol, character type, or plot motif that has recurred throughout literature. . . . Archetypal criticism is one of the most fruitful approaches to biblical literature . . ." (p. 22). "The archetypal content of the Bible gives it not only unity but universality as well. Archetypes express what is most common and elemental in human experience" (p. 25). These archetypes can be divided into two groups, the ideal (comic) and the unideal (tragic).

Having set down his basic ideas as

to method, the author then applies these principles to various Biblical works. He examines the story of origins, some heroic narrative, epic, tragedy, poetry, wisdom, satire, gospel, parable, and epistle to cite the major topics. In each case literary methodology and categories are utilized to illustrate the message of the texts under consideration. And it must be said that the work is very readable and enjoyable.

The major negative criticism is, alas, that Professor Ryken is not (and does not claim to be) a Biblical scholar. There are many instances where elementary acquaintance with Biblical scholarship would have enhanced the author's point or saved him from some very glaring errors. For example, in his discussion of Job, Ryken makes much of the "Redeemer" or *Go'el* passage. Too much in fact, for he argues that Job believes in an afterlife and attains a "blessed hope" (pp. 114-115). The opposite is true which is why Job despairs!

Ryken further argues that Jesus had great "oratorical ability" (p. 293). With this comment we probably would not quarrel, but he bases his conviction on the illustration of the Sermon on the Mount which is an arrangement made by the author of the Gospel! Ryken gives no indication that he is aware that these chapters are a composite work! But much of what he says about the Sermon, however, is quite good!

The above illustrations could be multiplied, but these should suffice to make the point. What Professor Ryken is attempting to do is, in the opinion of this reviewer, very sound and much needed, but what is needed more is someone to do this task who is knowledgeable in Biblical content and criticism. As usual the extremes of either approach do not fill the bill. Not much can be said for Biblical criticism which has little feeling for the message or this type of literary approach with little knowledge of Biblical background.

—James M. Efrid

Hosea. Hermeneia Commentary Series.
Hans Walter Wolff. Fortress Press.
1974. 259 pp. \$19.95.

Hermeneia is a new commentary series currently being prepared by scholars of international reputation. (Prof. Roland Murphy of Duke Divinity School is a member of the editorial board.) A few volumes will be translations of works already in print (e.g., this, the first Old Testament volume of the series to appear, is a translation of *Dodekapropheton I*, BKAT XIV/1 [1965]).

The volume consists of an Introduction (11 pp. dealing with such matters as background, language, theology, and transmission of the text); discussion of the biblical text; a topically arranged general bibliography; and indexes to subject matter and passages discussed.

The biblical text is divided into units ("rhetorical" and "kerygmatic") and discussed under the following headings: bibliography; (a new) translation; text-critical notes upon which the translation is based; form; setting; verse-by-verse interpretation; and aim.

The text-critical notes will be most appreciated by those who have had an introduction to the biblical languages, but they need not deter those who will use only an English text. Indeed, they will help such readers to understand why translations differ so widely in this book (which, for difficulty, is rivaled only by Job).

In general, Wolff is moderate in his textual treatment, tending to read with the Masoretic text in most cases as against the ancient versions. Occasionally, however, a blunder in sound text-critical judgment is encountered (e.g., at 2:6 [Hebrew 2:8]; 4:19; 10:5). Especially helpful are Wolff's conjectural explanations for apparent variants in the Septuagint, e.g., at 2:15 [Heb. 2:17], where the original "vineyards" has been generalized into "possessions" for non-agricultural city-dwelling readers during the Jewish diaspora.

Wolff's discussion of "form" is in-

sightful; indeed, such discussion is now a standard component of commentary presentation. It is this scholarly tool, as much as any other, which is rendering obsolete the commentaries of previous generations.

Plausible assignment of date to individual oracles and reconstruction of the situation to which each might have been addressed enables Wolff to give an unusually clear portrait of the development of Hosea's thought. For example, in chapter 4-11 (a once independent complex of traditions, later joined with two others, 1-3 and 12-14), initial ultimatums to repent, accompanied by announcements of doom, were followed by the realization that judgment cannot affect obedience. Even the catastrophic Assyrian invasion of 733 B.C. did not accomplish this. God's love (Hosea is the first to use this word to describe God's attitude toward Israel) transcends his wrath, and this is the ground for Israel's hope (as opposed to a hypothetical ability to change her priorities, i.e., to "repent"). Hence the prophet anticipates a new beginning, accompanied by the return of those who now dwell in foreign lands (see esp. pp. 201-204).

Unfortunately, Wolff's discussion of another complex of traditions, chapters 12-14, obscures his understanding of the development of Hosea's thought. In chapters 12-13 one finds announcement of God's judgment in the form of dismantlement of cultic and political institutions; God refuses to be compassionate. Then, in chapter 14, we find an announcement of salvation. The question which Wolff fails to clarify sufficiently is this: What is the relationship between the complexes 4-11 and 12-14? Do they reflect the same development in Hosea's thought, or do they reflect sequential stages? If the former is the case, then the anticipated dismantlement (which proved to be disfunctional) would have been fulfilled by the events of 733 B.C. Presumably, Hosea's new optimism after that date would not have included the Destruction of the re-

mainder of the country in 721. Or is it that the new proclamation of God's love allowed for hope even after 721? If, on the other hand, the complex 12-14 represent a later stage in Hosea's thought, then his optimism about a new beginning was shattered by the transgressions of his people, leading to a renewed proclamation of judgment beyond which salvation is possible.

Wolff's reconstruction of Hosea's hope for the future may be compared and contrasted with that of James Ward (*Hosea*, Harper and Row, 1966). Whereas Wolff states that "it also became clear [to Hosea] that Yahweh's judgment could not bring Israel to obedience" (p. xxix), Ward's Hosea believes that destruction of the present institutions is a *necessary* precondition for repentance and hope: "Nowhere does he offer redemption apart from national disaster" (p. 30; see also pp. 17ff.); such an experience "may lead to the re-creation of a covenantal community if she [Israel] proves . . . that she can accept Yahweh faithfully" (p. 59). Whereas Wolff states that, for Hosea, "Yahweh's judgment and mercy stand in conflict" (p. 204), for Ward's Hosea the two attributes of God cannot be separated so simplistically: God's judgment may be a manifestation of his graciousness; the impending destruction is another instance of God's unrelenting will to create a people for himself; while love stands opposed to wrathful retribution, it need not lead to a suspension of judgment (pp. 204ff.). However, Wolff and Ward agree that Hosea understands God's love (regardless of the manifestation it may take) to be the ground for Israel's hope.

Wolff's sections entitled "Aim" usually conclude with some mention of the relationship between Hosea's thought and that of various New Testament writers. This is an area so fraught with difficulty that many reputable commentaries avoid it (and one often wishes that many of the others had done so). A recent and responsible effort in this direction is

Brevard Child's *The Book of Exodus* (Westminster, 1974). Wolff's remarks are insightful, but the sensitive reader may note a repeated evaluative tone: the NT discussion is "more comprehensive" (p. 29); Hosea's words are "limited and preparatory" (p. 204), and they direct us to "the Lord of all history, whom we recognize in Christ" (p. 218); only in the NT does God's offer of salvation come with "finality" (p. 177); the judgment which Hosea announced was "only the beginning of that judgment which 'the daughter of Jerusalem' brought upon herself in the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth" (p. 169). It is fair to point out, however, that Wolff is only echoing assertions which the NT itself makes.

In conclusion: the volume reflects excellent scholarship and is highly to be recommended (but more so for the scholar than for the pastor, especially if the latter has not had an introduction to Hebrew). For the pastor, the standard work on Hosea is still that of Ward (which, unfortunately, is out of print).

—Lloyd Bailey

Targum and Testament: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament. Martin McNamara. Eerdmann's 1972. 227 pp. \$3.45 paperback.

The author of this book, who has earlier produced a more technical work, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, belongs to a growing circle of scholars attempting to illuminate the New Testament through an investigation of the targums.

The targums are those Aramaic paraphrases and translations of the Hebrew Bible made in antiquity for the benefit of Aramaic-speaking Jews who could not adequately understand Hebrew. Hebrew had, of course, ceased to be the daily language of most Jews in or shortly after the exile period. Jesus, in all probability spoke Aramaic as his native tongue.

The earliest translations of the

Bible were oral, not written, and for some time the writing of the Aramaic translation was frowned upon. Exactly when the oral targums first became written documents (and how ancient are the translations or traditions of translation which survive in extant targums) is a good question and one that McNamara discusses in this book. He believes that the Palestinian Targum of the Pentateuch, particularly as represented by the recently discovered Codex Neofiti I in the Vatican Library, is very ancient. There is no question of the late, i.e., medieval, date of most extant manuscripts. The real question has to do with the antiquity of the translations they embody. McNamara contends that striking doctrinal and verbal similarities with the New Testament, among other considerations, suggest an early date for the Palestinian Targum. Whether or not that is so will doubtless be a matter of continuing debate, although the importance of this area of investigation, for its own sake and for the importance it may have for New Testament study, is undeniable.

Targum and Testament also contains a valuable discussion of the formation of the Targumic tradition in the setting of synagogue worship and a useful appendix giving a brief introduction to the various targums.

—D. Moody Smith

The Dawn of Apocalyptic. Paul D. Hanson. Fortress. 1975. 426 pp. \$14.95.

This lucid and scholarly volume was written originally as a doctoral dissertation at Harvard University, where the author is presently teaching. It puts forth a new understanding of Jewish apocalyptic, arguing against the common view that sees it as discontinuous with Israelite prophecy and as the fruit of Persian dualism and Hellenism.

There are two key definitions that show the path traveled by this study. Hanson defines *prophetic* eschatology as "a religious perspective which

focuses on the prophetic announcement to the nation of the divine plans for Israel and the world which the prophet had witnessed unfolding in the divine council and which he translates into the terms of plain history, real politics, and human instrumentality" (p. 11). It is the prophet Isaiah who best exemplifies prophetic eschatology, because he interprets for king and people how his vision of the plans of the divine council actually works in history.

Apocalyptic eschatology is born in Is. 56-66 and develops in Zech. 9-10, Is. 24-27 ("early apocalyptic"), and is full-blown in Zech. 11-14. It is defined as "a religious perspective which focuses on the disclosure (usually esoteric in nature) to the elect of the cosmic vision of Yahweh's sovereignty—especially as it relates to his acting to deliver his faithful—which disclosure the visionaries have largely ceased to translate into the terms of plain history, real politics, and human instrumentality due to a pessimistic view of reality growing out of the bleak post-exilic conditions . . ." (p. 11).

What accounts for the development of prophetic into apocalyptic eschatology? It is the breakdown of the tension between vision and history, between the vision of the divine plan, and its actualization in history. This is manifest in Is. 56-66, and in post-exilic prophecy. The visionary element of early apocalyptic gradually becomes predominant. Why? Because of the disappointments of the post-exilic community. No one was able to maintain "the belief that the fulfillment of the vision of Yahweh's restoration of his people could occur within the context of this world" (p. 26). History ceases to be the area where the vision of the divine plan is worked out. Vision alone remains, a return to myth. Kings and nations are no longer instruments of divine purpose; they are "mere pawns in a cosmic chess game," as the Divine Warrior comes upon the scene and takes over.

The above concise summary needs to be supplemented by Hanson's statement of his "contextual-typological" methodology, which "seeks to interpret the apocalyptic compositions within the context of community struggle discernible behind the material studied, and it applies typological tools in analyzing the material. The typologies traced are those of poetic structure and meter, of prophetic oracle types (genres), and of the prophetic eschatology-apocalyptic eschatology continuum" (p. 29). Hanson applies this methodology in great detail to texts of Is. 40ff., Ezek. 40-48, Hag. and Zech. He succeeds in reconstructing the conflict between a visionary group (faithful to the tradition of Second Isaiah, and identified with Levites) and the hierocratic or Zadokite party which prevailed in the Restoration. The latter was not averse to using vision for their own purpose of legitimation (e.g., Zech. 1-8), but their orientation is on the practical, political level. The defeated group has recourse to the vision of the Divine Warrior who fights for them (e.g., Zech. 11-14)—in a fully developed apocalyptic eschatology.

This very competent and important study will become fundamental in all future discussion of biblical apocalyptic.

—Roland E. Murphy

A Theology of the New Testament.
George Eldon Ladd. Eerdmann's.
1974. 661 pp. \$12.50.

This volume should be of interest to the readers of the *Review* for several reasons. First, it is one of the very few New Testament theologies which has been attempted by American scholarship. Secondly the author is a leading scholar of the conservative-evangelical school of interpretation, which means that his approach is much more positive toward the New Testament records than most of what passes for New Testament interpretation today. And thirdly, the book is quite readable, scholarly, and con-

tains a large amount of valuable bibliographical data.

Intended to "... introduce seminary students to the discipline of New Testament theology," but not to offer "... an original contribution or to solve difficult problems ..." (p. 5), this volume nevertheless does the former quite well and the latter much better than the author would lead us to believe. Structurally the book is divided into six major sections: 1) The Synoptic Gospels; 2) The Fourth Gospel; 3) The Primitive Church; 4) Paul; 5) The General Epistles; and 6) The Apocalypse. Under each section problems are discussed, and a consideration of the leading themes and topics follows. In each category extensive bibliography is provided.

One may not always agree with Ladd, but the reader will know where Ladd stands. In fact there are times when his writing is a breath of fresh air in the hypercritical world of New Testament scholarship so dominated presently by "negative" Germanic ideas and concepts. Ladd attempts to strike some balance in the picture and views the New Testament records with respect and a positive attitude toward their general reliability. For example in setting the background for Paul's thought he says, "Neither the historical nor the kerygmatic aspects of the word of God can be emphasized to the neglect of the other" (p. 390). This is Ladd's basic approach throughout the book, however, not simply in his exposition of Paul's thought.

Further, he challenges some of the currently "accepted" (though not proved) ideas prevalent in New Testament circles especially some of those which are related to the person of Jesus and the "Son of Man." For example, he argues that the term "Son of Man" was not used by Jesus as a designation of a figure who is to come in the future and then applied to Jesus by the early Church. "The idea that the Son of Man might be an eschatological figure other than Jesus—the prevailing view in German theology—is exceedingly difficult because

there is no scrap of evidence that Jesus expected one greater than himself to come, but there is much evidence to the contrary" (p. 153). "There is no evidence in the entire New Testament, aside from the presuppositions of an extreme form criticism, that the early church called Jesus the Son of Man" (p. 337).

Naturally a person of Ladd's theological stance will have a more positive attitude toward the historical validity of the New Testament writings. For example in his discussion of the resurrection he says: "*something happened to create in the disciples belief in Jesus' resurrection*. Here is the crucial issue. It was not the disciples' faith that created the stories of the resurrection; it was an event lying behind these stories that created the faith" (p. 320). But lest anyone think that Professor Ladd is reverting to a literal "historicity" type approach, the reader should hear what he says about the resurrection. "Bultmann says that the resuscitation of a corpse is incredible. Even if this should be a valid objection, it carries no weight, for the New Testament does not picture the resurrection of Jesus in terms of the resuscitation of a corpse, but as *the emergence within time and space of a new order of life*" (p. 323).

Overall, this book provides much information and stimulates further reflection on issues of interpretation. It is an encyclopedia of New Testament thought and scholarship. A work like this deserves a topical index which it lacks.

For the parish minister this New Testament theology will probably be more beneficial and useful than any other available today. This book is strongly recommended for analysis and reflection.

—James M. Efird

The Bible Belt Mystique. C. Dwight Dorough. Westminster. 1974. 217 pp. \$7.95.

Years ago, while delivering a lecture to the Duke Divinity community, Ken-

neth Scott Latourette, renowned Professor of Christian Missions at Yale Divinity School, chided Protestant graduate students in religion for what he considered their slavish penchant for New England theological history and admonished them to pay more attention to religious leaders in the South, particularly those who had the greatest appeal for the common man. Professor Dorough's little book, which focuses upon the origin and nature of the "old-time religion" in the South in the 1780-1850 period and its twentieth-century "manifestations and effects," is written with that end in view. Designed "primarily for the layman, not for the church historian," it is, essentially, the product of thirty years of research into the religion and literature of the South, happily embellished with the author's current observations and reminiscences from a childhood in northeast Texas.

The sympathetic phenomenological treatment of "Southern religiousness" is worthy of praise, notably in its detailed description of camp meetings, the theological and emotional character of frontier revivalism, and the recognition of the sterling character and influence of the generality of its pulpiteers. While Dorough faithfully chronicles the grievous blemishes in the old-time religion—its bitter censoriousness, sectarianism, intolerance, anti-intellectualism, and the like—he generously recognizes that it served the high purpose of taming a lawless people, restoring order and direction to derelict souls, and supporting frontier democracy. Here one easily discerns the peculiar sources of strength and vitality that contributed to phenomenal growth of religion in the South and moulded the character of the frontier man in the pulpit. In his concluding chapter, with evident approbation, Dorough quotes from a 1897 address by Walter Hines Page: "I doubt if we have ever produced other men as great as our pioneer preachers. They were cast in so large a mould, they dealt so directly with the fundamental emotions of men and with

some of the great facts of the spiritual life, that they almost ranged themselves with the giants. I had rather have known one of these men than all the political and military heroes that we have since bred. The politician has been much the greater popular hero, but the preacher has had much the greater influence. For a century he was by far our greatest man—the man of the greatest original power and of the strongest character." Professor Dorough kindly refrains from lecturing us at this point, though, in fairness, he might have done so. Most of the pioneer preachers about whom he speaks had no formal seminary training.

Interestingly, as the contents of the book shift from description of the older faith to some of the "recent examples" with which the author is familiar, to this reviewer, at least, its tone appears less sympathetic, and considerable attention falls negatively, and perhaps deservedly, upon what has been bizarre, eccentric, fraudulent, misguided, cantankerous, and extreme in Southern twentieth-century religion. In the chapter entitled, "Sensationalism and

Excesses," snake handlers and faith-healers seem equally yoked with "God's radio salesmen," "Brother Al" and "Reverend Ike." The subsequent chapter on "Emotionalism in Education and Politics" places the current public flap over the content of school textbooks in the wholly pejorative context of the Scopes Monkey Trial in Tennessee. This terminal section, though both interesting and informative and replete with pertinent anecdotes and illustrative material, is too loosely organized and rambling, and insufficiently analytical to achieve the kind of terminal evaluation the subject deserves. Also, the random content of the subject matter makes the absence of an index the more regrettable.

Professor Dorough's contribution to the study of the old-time religion in the South and its contemporary manifestations should be received with appreciation and respect by the scholarly community. In fact, it may well be that church historians will look upon *The Bible Belt Mystique* with greater sympathy and favor than many of the laymen for whom the book is intended.

Barney L. Jones



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Happy Birthday

In the year of bicentennials (the United States of America and the Carolina Circuit of Methodism), in the year of Olympics and elections, another anniversary must not go unnoted. On November 9, 1926, the School of Religion of Duke University was formally inaugurated, although classes had started with the new academic year two months earlier.

The annual catalogue for Duke University in 1926-1927 stated (among other things in its 595 pages):

Among those for whom his gift was intended Mr. Duke placed ministers first. He felt sure that his native state of North Carolina, with its varied demands, stood in need first of a better educated and more efficiently trained ministry. The organization of the School of Religion of Duke University, the first of the professional schools to start its work, is the carrying out of this intention on the part of Mr. Duke. . . . Members of all other Christian denominations, as well as Methodist, will be made to feel welcome in the School of Religion and may be assured that the basis on which the work is conducted is broadly catholic and not narrowly denominational.

Christian work has now expanded to the extent that it covers far more than the work of a preacher or minister. The School of Religion of Duke University purposes to offer training for all types of Christian service. This will include missionaries, teachers of Bible and other religious subjects in the schools and colleges of the Church, directors of religious education, and social workers. . . . Still it must be kept clear that the minister in charge of a church, who is placed before the people to preach the Gospel of Christ, is the center and key to the whole problem of Christian work in the church. . . .

It is sincerely desired and expected that the standards thus set may increasingly influence the type of men and women entering Christian work and may lead them to demand the best of themselves in the prosecution of the work of Christ among men. . . . Students in the School of Religion are expected to take part in the religious and social life of the University campus and to share in athletic interests and activities. . . . They must satisfy the faculty as to their Christian character and purpose. . . .

At mid-century the campus, the buildings, the students, the faculty, the curriculum, the Church, and the world have undergone drastic and dramatic change. In planning this Anniversary Issue

of THE DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL REVIEW (formerly *Bulletin*) the editorial committee decided against a detailed, extensive chronology of past events. Historically-minded readers are referred to "Four Decades of the Divinity School" by Kenneth Willis Clark (THE DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL REVIEW, Spring, 1967, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 160-183).

We chose instead to invite representative graduates from each decade to recall the highlights—and the low moments?—of their seminary careers at Duke. As we hoped, they have produced a wide variety of perspectives and emphases, indicative of the wide range of outlooks and ministries which characterized Duke Divinity graduates through the years.

. . . Jim Huggin, incredibly but actively retired, has been a distinguished and influential leader in the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, now living in Charlotte;

. . . Mac Richey, bearing three Duke degrees, serves as Director of Continuing Education as well as Professor of Theology and Christian Nurture in the Divinity School;

. . . Charlotte Brown, still busy as parsonage wife and mother in the North Carolina Conference, has taken up a new career in Special Education of disadvantaged and mentally retarded children;

. . . Denver Stone is a versatile—and demonstrably hospitable!—missionary of the Board of Global Ministries, previously in Indonesia and Malaysia, currently in Singapore;

. . . Randy James, after an effective campus ministry at University Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is enrolled in the doctoral program at Southern Methodist University;

. . . Leonard Lassiter, who matriculated in January of this year and has been working in a Presbyterian Church in Greensboro for summer Field Education, points the current student body into the second semicentenary.

For the rest of this number the committee decided to focus on the present and future of theological education and its relevance for contemporary ministry. Faculty members from the various curricular divisions were asked to relate their own particular discipline to some issue in the life of the Church: Robert Cushman on theology and the ecumenical movement, Richard Goodling on the Bible and pastoral counseling, David Steinmetz on historical factors affecting the role of women in the church. (Professor Goodling's paper was prepared for the previous number of the REVIEW on the use of the Bible in various theological disciplines, but had

to be postponed on account of space limitations; it appears here as a fitting representative of the Ministerial Studies Division in the curriculum.)

Fifty years of physical, academic, and hopefully spiritual growth. Fifty years of steady advancement to a place among the very top ranks of theological seminaries. Fifty years of service to Christ by the training of his ministers and disciples. At the Faculty Retreat which inaugurated this new term we engaged in "Reflections and Conversations: Past, Present, and Future." Among the discussion questions submitted by the Dean and his planning committee, here are some of the more provocative:

Do you believe that Duke Divinity School is one of the five best seminaries in the United States? Why or why not?

How would you describe Duke Divinity School? Does this description satisfy you? If not, how would you like to change it?

For what are we best known? For what do we wish we were best known?

What do we believe are our strengths and our weaknesses? What do we not do at all that needs to be done?

What is our responsibility to the church, the university, society, our students, each other, and the United Methodist Church?

As a Divinity School, what should be our vocation—for what purpose and ends are we called?

What is the future of an ecumenical, university-based, research-oriented Divinity School? What challenges will such schools face in the future? Is Duke such an institution? In what ways do we want to be such an institution? Why or why not?

What are the frontiers in Christian thought and mission today? In terms of those frontiers are we being pioneers? How?

What do you believe is the primary challenge facing the Christian community in the future? What are we at Duke doing to address or prepare to address that challenge?

Functionally, what is our image of the Christian ministry? What three ministerial roles does our program emphasize? Do you support these understandings? If not, what image and roles do you desire and what would we need to do to make them central to our M.Div. program?

How well do we know the various needs of our diverse student body? Describe each group in detail. How well do we meet these needs? How could we improve?

How well do our students learn what we aim to teach? How best can we evaluate our teaching and our students' learning? What criteria should we use?

What sort of Christian ministers do we graduate? In what ways do we wish we could do a more satisfactory job in preparing them for ministry in today's world? How might we do this?

Reflecting on the M.Div. degree, what does it mean? What does it certify? To whom are we responsible? As a theological faculty, for what (in terms of our graduates) are we responsible?

As we move into the second half century of the Duke University Divinity School, we invite our graduates and friends to join us in the quest for answers to at least some of these questions.

And to each and all we say: Many Happy Returns. . . .!

—C.L.

Reminiscences, Recollections, and Reflections

JAMES G. HUGGIN, B.D., 1929:

Venerable but still serviceable buildings on the Trinity College campus were coming down and in their places were rising new ones of red brick and white marble to house the recently-born Duke University. The sound of air hammers and cranes, bull dozers and trucks and shouting workmen was not inappropriate, so we felt, for students of divinity in an age when much in thought and life was coming down to give place to the new. The School of Religion (as it was called at first) was new. Being new it was free of old, encrusted doctrines and methods—or so we thought, we students of the first class, all thirteen of us, together with, one suspected, the majority of our nine professors.

The sights and sounds of construction were symbolic of the tide of idealism then sweeping the campuses of the nation. Students all over the place were signing pledges not to participate in war, any war, from that time forth; for were not the statesmen fashioning a world in which, never again, should war be “an instrument of national policy”? Churches were caught up in the tide of confidence, indeed helped to create such a tide. What a time to be a student in a new school of theology that was a new kind of school, to be equipped for ministry in churches which surely couldn’t wait for us to get to them and show the Truth, the Way and the Life in the new era!

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!

There is no measuring the influence of that body of teachers in that center of learning where we students became aware of the direction our ministry should take. I recall my own feeling of inadequacy for the ministerial task the year between college and seminary, which I spent teaching in the public school. Three years later, however, outfitted with a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Duke, I had at least double the confidence in my preparation that was seemly for anyone. Allowing for all the erosion of self-assurance that the acids of the pastoral ministry so quickly—and

mercifully—effect, still, to this good day, I look to my theological education at Duke (together with a six-month introduction at Candler) as the sheet anchor which has held my craft steady in many an emergency these years of my voyage.

If some of us graduated with an overblown confidence in our ability to work miracles in local churches, the new faculty in the new seminary had something to do with it. B. Harvie Branscomb and Paul Neff Garber were in this alumnus' judgment and experience, the two who most persuasively fired the students with the apocalyptic spirit. "Harvie," to take him first, was to us an awesomely bright star in the academic firmament of younger scholars. And, to brighten his glow, he was with us because, as the report had it, S.M.U. had summarily dismissed him from its theological school faculty for being too liberal. The Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy was yet indulged in by dwellers along, as we saw it, certain backwaters of the Church's life, but "we few, we happy few" were well past that as we shared this seminary-sponsored heady entrance into the modern world. Professor Branscomb was a major asset among us, being a top scholar and all that. Best of all, he was unacceptable in Texas!

And there was Paul Neff Garber. The only one-hundred-percent Methodist on the faculty, affirmed Dr. Gilbert Rowe. Professor Garber was a convert to Methodism who had gone all the way, an uncritical, unqualified, unconditional Methodist. He adored Methodist history, he all but worshipped John Wesley, and he displayed a rapturous confidence that graduates of the Duke School of Religion would themselves, single-handedly, redeem the Church's ancient liturgical promise to edify believers and convert the world.

We were limited in many respects in those first years, yet I think we enjoyed an advantage. Our purpose was single, simple, clear. We were working together, students and faculty, that we students might become effective pastors of churches. We were unmistakably taught that our life's mission was to bring to people under our care the claims of the Christian Gospel, claims derived from the transcendent, righteous God, whose demands were not only, among humans, to do justly and love mercy, but also, unashamedly, to walk humbly with our God. This was our burden. This was our freedom.

Once in my student days a close friend, Jim Phillips, and I were downtown in Durham when we met up with a friend of his. I was introduced. Then Jim said of his friend, not without a trace

of understandable envy, "He's a business man. He doesn't have to save the world." We were seminary students. We were headed for the ministry of the Church. We were "called." Come wind, come weather, we *had* to save the world.

For our seminary's bequest of that sense of high duty one is forever grateful.

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McMURRY S. RICHEY, A.B., 1936; B.D., 1939; Ph.D., 1954:

Invitation to remembrance of things past surely allows for a modicum of nostalgic bias of memory and mention; indeed, if not admitted, it operates withal, and I can risk seeming sanguine of judgment when grateful for legacy. Forty years is a long slope to look back down, to a School of Religion (renamed "The Divinity School" in 1940) just then a decade old in a Duke University only two years older (although outgrowth of almost century-old Trinity College). In such privileged selectivity I must acknowledge gratefully an already proficient faculty, growing in power and recognition, and transcending provincialism of denomination, region, and academy; a demanding course of studies with generally high expectations; a close fellowship of students, depression-poor but manifold of talent and promise; an evangelical liberalism steeped in devotion, rooted in historical study of Scripture, and expressed in confident dedicated ministry and zealous social concern; a consciousness of things astir, of new emergents in the life of the school, the place of the churches in the larger Church and Faith, and the imperative tasks of Church and churches in a darkening, troubled world.

The strength in Biblical faculty already presaged their individual and the institutional excellence of later years. If eminent New Testament scholar B. Harvie Branscomb, a liberal Southern Methodist, was hardly available to our class because called on to aid academic libraries at Duke, across America, and even in South America, his quality of scholarship and Oxford-influenced academic expectations were nevertheless pervasively influential. After our time he would be Dean of The Divinity School, later Chancellor of Vanderbilt University.

In his absences emerged his erudite younger colleague, Kenneth W. Clark, a Northern Baptist then, later Methodist. Precise, disciplined, and polished, he was already on the way to knowing every New Testament manuscript in the world, and eager to take us

through Greek, Hellenistic backgrounds, and the life and teachings of Jesus, in University of Chicago genetic socio-historical approach. His subsequent preeminence in New Testament textual scholarship eventuated in distinguished service as Director of the International Greek New Testament Project.

Naive entering students not yet weaned from Biblical literalism were afforded a gentler transitional nurture by Dean Elbert Russell, devout Quaker, Preacher to the University, social prophet, ecumenical pioneer, and profoundly engaging, inspiring Old and New Testament scholar-teacher, if reluctant administrator. He was Dean for thirteen formative years in the life of the school and the lives of students. Liberal faith and Biblical scholarship need not be feared, indeed could be confidently espoused, when productive of such life and witness.

Promising new reinforcement in Old Testament studies arrived along with our class in masterful young Hebraist William F. Stinespring, of the United Brethren, later Presbyterian, an earnest "red Bible" (Chicago translation) toting spokesman for Amos and Hosea, even at mill picket lines. He would become the beloved "Uncle Dudley," perennial core course professor shepherding generations of "babes in the woods" through Old Testament introduction, and Hebrew teacher extraordinary, commentator, translator, musician, "anchor-man" in daily chapel services. With these to guide us, is it any wonder we took Scripture seriously, if liberally? The era of the new Biblical theologies was still just ahead for Duke faculty and students.

Renewal of historical theology likewise lay in the near future, and till then both church history and systematic theology were liberally shy of classical traditions. Two brilliant new teaching scholars, Petry and Outler, would soon contribute to that needed recovery. Meantime Paul Neff Garber, enthusiastic convert to church history (from university teaching) and to Methodism (from the Church of the Brethren), was our genial and zestful taskmaster through the whole course of Christian history—at least its personages, events, movements, and institutions. His repeated accolades to "hard workers" among religious leaders studied evoked our byword "terrible toilers" for them, for him, and somewhat presumptuously for ourselves. He would serve later as Dean of The Divinity School, and subsequently as a Bishop of The Methodist Church. The promising advent of another from the Brethren, later Methodist Ray C. Petry, our middle year brought fresh illumination of early and medieval church history through sophisticated

scholarship and charismatic lectures on Christianity and culture, social teachings, classics of faith, and the mystical tradition. He became a foremost medieval church historian, author, editor, and James B. Duke Professor. In our time St. Francis was his special study and ideal, and became ours.

Systematic theology was not "in" at Duke then, or in liberalism generally, but Gilbert T. Rowe was. He had been Book Editor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and prime target of Fundamentalist critics seeking his trial for heresy at the 1924 General Conference. Any who missed study with—and of!—this deep spirit, free mind, eccentric "character," and veteran of inward spiritual conflict and outward battles for liberal theology in Southern Methodism, can never make it up. In espousing with him D. C. Macintosh's "theology as an empirical science" we were likely, however, to miss his own wider and deeper sources of faith and thought. Too late for most of us, scintillating young Methodist Albert C. Outler came in our senior year to re-root the faith of our fathers. With philosophical acumen and theological comprehension like unto his patron Origen's, and uttering unknown tongues in class, he brought both classical richness and daring currency to curriculum and community. He has since become a foremost Methodist historical theologian, Protestant interpreter of Roman Catholic developments from Vatican II, and authority on John Wesley.

It was H. Shelton Smith, however, who was our prime awakener from undogmatic slumbers. Literally roaming our seminar room, he caught us up not only in mind but in body in his own dramatic pilgrimage from near humanism of progressive religious education into neo-Reformation realism about sin, grace, church, culture, and ideology. But for him we might not have read Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Tillich, the Niebuhrs, and C. H. Dodd; and we might have concealed from ourselves the tragic racial acculturation of Southern faith and church, which he still relentlessly exposes. A Congregational-Christian, now of the United Church of Christ, he was chief founding father of the North Carolina Council of Churches, of Duke's graduate study in religion, and of studies in American Christianity, as well as pivotal theological critic of liberal religious education. It was in this critical reaction that he led us into neo-Reformation writings and also back into the history of American thought and racist churchmanship. He would become James B. Duke Professor of American Religious Thought and the acknowledged dean of studies in American Christianity.

The School of *Religion* was not yet to follow neo-orthodoxy into jettisoning liberal studies *about* religion, however, and both our faculty and stellar Duke University scholars introduced us to the history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology of religion. James Cannon II, Trinity College veteran already storied for gruff exterior hiding warm caring, and for "old notes" punctually opened and closed with the bell (remember the collision with a student trying to beat him to the exit?), took us through the history of primitive and world religions and into Christian missions, his great concern. High standards of scholarship were also his concern, and it was he who best trained us in careful research and meticulous documentation. Influential in Methodist theological education and long-time "Mr. Phi Beta Kappa" (Secretary) at Duke, he was later Acting Dean and then Dean of The Divinity School. Sagacious Alban G. Widgery brought an English twinkle of spirit and a resolute Aristotelian and Cambridge realism to the philosophy of religion. Anglican, and resolutely English through decades at Duke, he was chairman of the Duke University Department of Philosophy but also on the School of Religion faculty. His personal friendship, rich history of philosophy and philosophy of history, and critical and constructive personal realism continue to undergird this former student in healthy critical resistance to reductionistic analysis and naturalisms on the one hand and absolute and personal idealisms on the other. The psychology of religion was towering pulpit orator Franklin S. Hickman's arena for vindicating the meaning and possibility of purposive behavior, Christian selfhood and vocation, and even Christian theism, against the atheistic implications of behavioristic psychology, biological evolutionism, and psychoanalytic thought. A Northern Methodist who became a powerful leader in North Carolina Methodism, he was our other Preacher to the University and later Dean of the Chapel and teacher of preaching. Another Quaker, Hornell N. Hart, came to the Department of Sociology and the School of Religion our senior year and taught social ethics, sociology of religion, cultural anthropology, and modernized mystical disciplines like unto current cults of meditation. For other studies in sociology and in psychology we had access to outstanding university professors—Howard E. Jensen for social pathology and criminology; Charles A. Ellwood for sociological theory; Edgar T. Thompson for regional demography of the South, and race relations; William McDougall as social psychologist interpreting behavior as dynamic (purposive), and Helge Lundholm for abnormal psychology.

Our scant work in practical theology depended on three Methodist undergraduate religion professors who shared time with the School of Religion. Benign and tolerant Hiram E. Myers, experienced minister and professor of English Bible, and later Chairman of the undergraduate Department of Religion, taught homiletics with Phillips Brooks' approach to preaching as "truth through personality," and gave wise and helpful guidance. Hersey E. Spence taught religious education, lectured alliteratively, wrote religious dramas and much verse, directed plays and pageants, entertained students hospitably—and vigorously countered our social gospel and pacifism. Jesse Marvin Ormond was affectionate "Papa Ormond" instructing us "young gentlemen" in ministry and morals before sending us out in summer "Duke Foundation" (Endowment) work in rural Methodist churches. His long service as Director of the Rural Church Program for the Duke Endowment and our school is commemorated in the present J. M. Ormond Center for Research, Planning, and Development. Director of the Chapel Choir J. Foster Barnes and Director of Religious Activities Merri-mon Cuninggim, both Methodists, gave a valuable course in church music and hymnology. But much of what we brought to the work of ministry as we left the School of Religion came from observation and the varied experiences on "Foundation." We learned the rest on the job, with main force and awkwardness.

Who were we who came to study in such a school? We were smaller in number then, with half our present faculty, and a third of our present student enrollment. Most were Methodist, most Southern, yet our 1938-39 total of 117 men and 1 woman represented 8 denominations, 41 colleges and universities, 17 states (with no recruiting needed then). Of some 40 entering in 1936, 29 received the B.D. in 1939; others dropped out, transferred, or delayed graduation theses. We were unmarried, mostly; "Foundation" work and funds were available only to the single, and depression era economics allowed few to have wives, cars, even luxuries like radios. A few were student pastors and could marry and drive. When several of us brought brides to our senior year it seemed as if Luther were again emptying the monasteries! As for quality of students then and now, today *may* see improvement, but our fellows of 1936-39 included a fair share of future bishops and aspirants, district superintendents, prominent pastors, missionaries abroad, church executives, college and seminary faculty, and many other good ministers of Jesus Christ in just as important modest appointments. We surely studied longer and harder, with six days

of classes, more courses, a heavy thesis requirement, and much more stringent grading than in this time of inflated marks. We were too busy and poor for much distraction. What time and funds could be saved were needed for visits to nearby women's colleges; those visits were not distraction but redemption!

After my Alumni Sunday sermon in Duke Chapel recently I was surprised at the surprise of one of our keen students who heard me recall the ferment of social concern and activism of my student generation. There is more to tell. We were consciously participants in a changing school, church, and world. A newly developing alumni self-consciousness was expressed in the recently formed Alumni Association and the new *Duke School of Religion Bulletin*, to embody Duke ideas and news. Strong student leadership developed. Student deputations spread the personal and social gospel. A new worship committee inaugurated morning services in York Chapel to supplement the Tuesday and Friday services (of Elbert Russell and Frank Hickman) in Duke Chapel. A missionary committee emerged, and a spiritual life committee, stimulated and deepened under leadership of the Dean. Our first student journal, *Christian Horizons*, began with an article asking, "Have We a Gospel for the Poor?" and the national *Christian Student* magazine promptly reprinted it. A new doctoral program in religion awarded three Ph.D. degrees as we became Bachelors of Divinity in 1939. The academic impact of this program on faculty and students through the years is incalculable but manifestly enormous. The American Association of Theological Schools issued its first accreditations in 1938 and Duke's name was written there. That same year Duke University also gained coveted membership in the exclusive Association of American Universities. Reunion of three branches of Methodism in 1939 gave ecumenically staffed Duke new status and eventually support as one of the official theological schools of a nation-wide and world-related Methodist Church.

We were kept too conscious of events and ideas in ecumenical Christianity and of conflicts and injustices and needs in the world to settle into pietistic, academic, or denominational insularity and self-satisfaction. Elbert Russell was delegate in 1937 to the Christian Life and Work "Conference on Church, State and Community" at Oxford and the Faith and Order Conference at Edinburgh, and was one of a few American church leaders appointed to the ensuing provisional committee to meet at Utrecht in 1938 and lay the foundations for a World Council of Churches. His active involvement, and Shelton Smith's galvanizing attention to the prolific

theological and ethical literature of Edinburgh and Oxford, kept us aware of Christendom as well as of impending world conflicts which cast their shadow upon those conferences. Meanwhile back on the campus, we were hosts to the 1937 conference of the flourishing Southern Interseminary Movement, and brought about in our social room what was probably the first interracial dining at Duke—with the help of a resolute Dean and student committee against an intransigent university administration. Among the stimulating speakers was Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University, regarded by Elbert Russell as the greatest preacher in America. One outcome of the conference—since we furnished 53 of the 97 registrants—was the election of a Duke student as president for the 1938 conference in Louisville.

A procession of visiting professors (including theologian John K. Benton of Drew University, later Dean of Vanderbilt School of Theology, and Homer H. Dubs, philosopher and Chinese classicist, later of Columbia, Hartford, and Oxford), eminent lecturers, and leading preachers—more than now, it seems—had invigorating impact on student and faculty thinking about faith, church, ministry, and world. “Foundation” students (most of us) were required to participate in the two-week Methodist Pastors’ School held on campus after June graduation each year, and heard also lecturers in the concurrent Institute of International Relations and Rural Church Institute; for example, Edwin Lewis, James Moffatt, Frederick Norwood, E. McNeill Poteat, Roswell P. Barnes, Y. T. Wu, and Arthur Hewitt. The annual summer Junaluska School of Religion extended the service of our faculty and brought some faculty members from other institutions. The Centennial of Duke University (from beginnings in Randolph County in 1838) was celebrated in 1938 with a bevy of notable lecturers, and was followed early in 1939 by our School of Religion Symposium on Modern Religious Problems with another cast of stellar speakers, including Pitirim Sorokin, William P. Montague, Henry Sloan Coffin, George A. Buttrick, Charles Clayton Morrison, Allan Knight Chalmers, Charles E. Raven, Robert L. Calhoun, Harlan Paul Douglass, Ivan Lee Holt, and Emil Brunner. There were other occasional lecturers, and outstanding visiting preachers in Duke University Chapel. Preachers for 1936-37 alone included Luther A. Weigle, Theodore Cuyler Speers, Albert W. Beaven, Lynn Harold Hough, Rufus M. Jones, Ivan Lee Holt, John A. Mackay, Frederick B. Fisher, Edwin A. Penick, Paul B. Kern, and others. Probably most influential of all was perennial Religious Emphasis Week

preacher Henry Hitt Crane, whose dramatic preaching filled Page Auditorium with students at mid-day, and the Chapel at night, and who powerfully called us out of self-preoccupation into service, out of provincialism into world responsibility, out of cultural conformity into radical social reform for economic justice, racial brotherhood, and world peace—all in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

This was the school, and these were the people, who helped to make up our minds and ministry, from 1936 to 1939. A few months after graduation we were in churches in a nation in a world at war.

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CHARLOTTE CHURCHILL BROWN, M.R.E., 1949:

My vantage point is an unusual one in three ways: I was one of the female minority in the Duke Divinity School class of 1949; I also became the wife of a B.D. candidate; and I am the mother of a 1976 M.Div. graduate. Thus, experiences at Duke have enriched our family in many ways.

Memories

From February, 1948, until June, 1949, and graduation with my coveted M.R.E. degree, I have many cherished memories. Nelle Bellamy (M.A., 1950) took me in on the snowy night of my arrival from High Point, where I had just graduated in late January. James Brown and Earl Richardson were to arrive by Jeep a few days later—all of us to begin mid-year in Dr. W. F. Stinespring's Old Testament course and Dr. Frank Young's New Testament. Oh! The class is in the middle of the book. Who are J, E, H, D, P? We will not forget Abishag, King David's "bedwarmer," and "Uncle Dudley's" sparkling dark eyes and broad smile, nor his "estimable brother-in-law W. F. Albright." . . . More problems. How do we outline the entire New Testament in one semester? Take comfort! Our task could never be as difficult as that of our Chinese fellow-student, learning Greek from an English-speaking teacher.

For variety, I also joined Harold ("Educated-at-the-wrong-end") Hipps' square dance group, Hipps' Hoppers, mostly divinity students and friends. (That autographed rolling-pin wedding gift is still in use.) The campus was beautiful in the spring, and I was in love and became engaged in May. Dr. John Rudin's speech class banquet included an assignment for James on how he made

a successful marriage proposal. The title was "The Magic Formula Works!"

First semester, fall of 1948, was to end in late January, 1949, so wedding plans for Christmas interrupted several things. Dr. Waldo Beach kindly gave me an extension of time on my Christian ethics term paper. I found out that James and Earl, like hosts of other students, *did* have to study all night for Dr. Ray Petry's church history exam. Ruby Bailey spent the night with me and sympathized with my "deserted bride's" tears. Alas, exams had top priority for us all. Jerry and Mary Murray and Harry and Fran Jordan were married at the same time we were. I am sure wedding bells still ring often, but it is easier now with the semester ending before Christmas, a welcome change.

There was time for fun, singing a duet with Calvin Knight, tenor, accompanied by Dr. Beach, at one of the banquets. Divinity Dames afforded good fellowship with the wives of students and faculty. The favorite game in the Social Room was Carroms, thumped with the finger. The stove in the adjoining kitchen warmed many a can of soup for a quiet, budget-conscious lunch. In the dining hall, one student got the attention of his friends by hitting them on the back of the head with an empty, single-serving cereal box. Yes, it was Purnell ("Cereal Box") Bailey.

Dr. Hersey Spence urged me on to finish my thesis by May 1, and I sandwiched that in, well filled with my experience as Director of Christian Education at Asbury Methodist Church. I also learned to cook, keep house, and be a good wife. It was a great year and a half. Then I continued to work on a P.H.T. (Put Husband Through) while James finished Divinity School. How many were doing this joyfully then and are now!

Changes

Having close contact with the present Divinity School through my son Wesley, I have observed several changes. The school has grown in size of student body and faculty and in its beautiful physical plant, of which Dr. Robert Cushman must feel justifiably proud. By means of the Pastors' School, Convocation, and the library, the school continues to be a source of learning and inspiration for its graduates and others.

It has been wonderful to see my son's excitement with his learning and his respect and admiration for those who teach him. Our feelings were the same. We knew our teachers as scholars dedicated to filling us with as much knowledge as we could hold. They were

generous in sharing themselves as persons and seemed to scorn material ostentation. Do they still ride bicycles and drive old cars?

When I was one of about eight women in Divinity School, we were probably a little "special" in the eyes of the faculty. Now, with about eighty women, I wonder whether this feeling has diminished. My own motive for being there was two-fold: to become a Director of Christian Education and to be near the young man I loved and become a minister's wife. My career in Christian Education changed from paid to volunteer when my husband received his first appointment, and I have never used my training for financial gain since. (Those in school now, please take note.) In retrospect, had I taken an M.A. in English instead, I would have saved myself the two years in 1968-70 getting this degree, needed to continue a second career, which began at Wilmington College in 1963. Ministers' wives have to be adaptable, and the education of four children is expensive. Motherhood and teaching have become my ministry. On the other hand, my time at the Divinity School has given me tools for further study and for evaluation of what I read and hear, as well as a deeper appreciation of James's work. It was one of the happiest periods in my life. How can that be measured?

A most significant change has taken place since Dr. Harold Bosley was dean in 1949. At the dean's invitation, the scholarly, dark-skinned Dr. Eddy Asirvatham of India came to lecture. He purposefully wore his white tunic and turban in the Duke cafeteria, for if he had been mistaken for a Negro, he would not have been served. Dr. Bosley and the students were ashamed. There were no black students in our school. This year Professor Herbert O. Edwards, a Negro, former coal miner, now minister and teacher, spoke eloquently during the baccalaureate communion in Duke Chapel on the miracle that he should be there. Our collective social consciousness is bringing, at last, equal rights and responsibility for blacks and women.

Outlook

Miracles are happening every day. God's plan is working. It was working in the minds and hearts of Benjamin Duke and his advisors who set up the Duke Foundation, benefiting all of us and thousands of others. (In contrast, the problem of a will not guided by God has recently been seen at the death of billionaire Howard Hughes, whose pathetic life also apparently lacked any receptivity to God's will.) God's plan is working in our shared experience in

God's kingdom. Thank you, Duke family, fellow students, teachers, for being a part of my life, my family's life, my church's life. Thank you for helping us think and grow. May your future and ours be bright and long—even, by God's mercy and grace—eternal!

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DENVER STONE, B.D., 1959; Th.M., 1971:

In 1954 my wife and I had an interview with the Personnel Secretary of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church regarding missionary service in Asia. Both of us were trained teachers, but I was also a supply pastor. The secretary advised us that seminary training was required if I wanted to be both teacher and pastor. Two years later I entered Duke Divinity School with a full commitment to missionary service. I knew what I wanted to do and where I was going. From the very beginning my aim was to complete the course so that we could become "real live" missionaries.

I was a commuter student or a student pastor. This included a daily drive of about seventy miles, but it also meant that I was not a part of the student life at Duke. But I didn't object too much because I enjoyed the parish work and I also wasn't really interested in what took place outside the classroom. My goal was to pass the courses, get the degree, and become a missionary.

Since I was a day student only, my memories of my Duke days are basically centered on what happened in the classroom and also the annual missions week activities. One event in speech class still lingers with me. I gave a short speech as assigned. After the class ended, comment sheets were given to those of us who had made speeches that day. The main comment on my sheet was, "Your trousers are too short!" I never could figure out what the relationship was between the speech and the length of the trousers. Especially since it was a classroom assignment. And as I remember that particular time I just didn't have too many trousers in the first place.

Missions Week was the highlight of the year for me. The annual event was usually held at the beginning of the second semester, and our visitors or speakers were from the Board of Missions of The Methodist Church. This week stood out for me because it was my main interest, and it also provided me an opportunity to talk with the visitors about my future work. This was

the only week of the year that I attended chapel regularly as well as any lectures that were given outside of my own classes. Missions Week solidified for me my own commitment to missions and also strengthened the encouragement that was provided by the Missions Professor at Duke.

As I look back, I am aware that I wasn't as open-minded as I should have been when the various speakers spoke about missions in various parts of the world. I was living with an idealistic philosophy of missions, such as "people waiting to hear the gospel," and "harmonious relationships among missionaries and national workers." The visiting speakers often times spoke of the "real" situation and the problems involved. This kind of mission talk didn't impress me too deeply, and I really didn't believe it until I arrived in Southeast Asia and became a part of the work there. Missions Week challenges and opportunities were perhaps the very best preparation that I received for the work that I was committed to.

In my rush to complete the course I did attend one summer session. That was perhaps the hardest term of the three years. Daily classes, long distance driving, and parish and family responsibilities really took the sap out of me. Many times I wondered if I would get the work—papers, books read, exams, etc—completed on time. And there were times when I seriously thought about giving it up because the future just wasn't worth what the present was demanding. But the desire to be a missionary kept me going to the end.

In June, 1959, I received my Bachelor of Divinity degree *in absentia* since I was already signed up with the Missions Board. I was ordained in my home conference the day of Duke graduation and was also making my way to my first missionary conference and the beginning of orientation.

I really missed a great deal at Duke because I didn't apply myself fully or didn't take advantage of all that was offered to me. My goal was to complete the course and passing grades only were sufficient for that. But I did return eleven years later for the Master of Theology degree. The concern of the professors and the warmth of their friendship, the openness of the students and their involvement in life, and my own desire to learn and to absorb all that I could take in made that one year a rich and meaningful one for me.

The days at Duke are just memories now, and I would not

want to relive them in any way whatsoever. The memories of academic study, realistic thinking, chapel inspiration, and practical living and service make the present-day activities worthwhile and rewarding. The same God who was in control twenty years ago still reigns today. Life in and with Jesus Christ and the commitment to His cause is more challenging and rewarding than it has ever been before.



C. RANDAL JAMES, M.Div., 1968; Th.M., 1969:

One sunny day, in the spring of 1968, the following poem, entitled "Impressions of the Day," mysteriously and anonymously appeared on the bulletin board opposite the divinity students' mailboxes:

I listened!
I heard sounds, but no sense was heard.
I saw the empty minds on empty faces.
I looked with pity on the human race.

I listened!
I heard ignorance pretend to know!
I saw wisdom being trod into clay!
I looked for help to lead the way!

I listened!
I heard no sound that wished to help!
I saw no hand extended to the weak!
I looked for the leaders of the meek!

I listened!
I heard no sound that called or inspired!
I saw no well worn path where saints had trod!
I looked, but nowhere did I find the hand of God!

At the bottom of the page there was a notation that this poem was written especially for and dedicated to the personnel at the Duke Divinity School.

The first impulse upon reading this poetic endeavor is to attribute it to ignorance, to a lack of understanding about what actually was the case at the Divinity School. On the other hand, someone had penned beside this literary dart thrown at us, "Welcome to the real world, kid!"

I suppose that most of us who were in seminary in the decade of the sixties have been out in the "real" world for a number of years now, though I doubt that the Divinity School exists, or then

existed, in some “unreal” world. Nonetheless, could the above poetic barb be hurled at us again in this present day?

In his Convocation Address on September 18, 1965, Dean Robert E. Cushman said the following to the students and faculty of the Divinity School:

Specifically, I am going to say that the aim of theological education is nothing else than to discover, each for himself, the ministry of Jesus Christ in that full range of its meaning and significance that is possible to us in our time and for our historical situation. . . . I am also stressing . . . that the aim of theological education is that each of you should, indeed must, unpack it for himself. I am suggesting the general area of buried treasure, but each of you must take to pick and shovel. There is simply no substitute for each of you joining the hunt.

The Dean captured in those words what I take to be not only the essence of formal theological education, but also our continuing theological education as well. The hunt never ends. Unfortunately, many never joined the hunt, accepting only the bounty for which others had diligently searched. Many joined the hunt, only to drop out when the treasure found was not that which was expected, or when the treasure found became a substitute for that which was originally sought. And then there are the faithful who have continued the hunt through the years, finding new treasures as they creatively and sensitively carry on their ministry, as they hear God’s word in ever changing situations.

The class of 1968 heard the voice of the Dean with both anticipation and apprehension. On that day in September those prospective ministers of the Church were finally to begin their three or four years of formal theological education. What an exciting and confusing experience it was to be! It was the best of times and the worst of times. For we were destined to be challenged not only intellectually in the classroom, but challenged also in the internal affairs of the Divinity School, especially as those affairs related to community life and the curriculum, and challenged by the external affairs of Durham and the larger world.

We struggled along with such courses as “Baby” Bible (“You mean we have to outline the whole thing!”), Church History (“I can’t get this topic more narrow!”), Systematic Theology (“Theology presupposes religion going on.”), Greek (“Let’s talk about the basketball game.”), American Christianity (“Does he really memorize these lectures?”), Christian Ethics (“I need a caddy for this afternoon.”), Old Testament (“Heilsga what?”), Philosophical Theology (“You get his even sentences and I’ll get his odd ones.”),

Pastoral Care ("I hear you saying . . ."), and Preaching ("How does one develop a Scottish accent?"). As we tried to synthesize these into something resembling a coherent whole, we also struggled with and sought to be sensitive to the human needs manifested after the tragic death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the escalation of the war in Vietnam, the assassination of Bobby Kennedy, the plight of the Duke non-academic workers, and the "death" of God. These were turbulent and searching years.

Yet somehow through it all, by the grace of God, the Divinity School community carried on its work and mission. It prepared its students to take on the challenge of being theologians in the "real" world, a direct consequence of a dedicated and scholarly faculty. Whether we like it or not, or fully understand it or not, that identity of "theologian" is what we are really about. Whether we identified ourselves as being in a program preparing for parish ministry, for teaching, for campus ministry, for chaplaincy, for pastoral care, or for Christian education, the term encompassing all of us is "theologian." In an earlier article in the DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL REVIEW (Winter, 1968) I suggested this same point. After being out of school some seven years now, I still think that developing theologians is, or ought to be, the primary concern of a seminary. No matter in what specific form of ministry we find ourselves, we as theologians are always about the task of interpreting God's action in the world and the fitting, appropriate responses of His people to Him and to one another.

But such a notion presupposes that our theological education is dynamic and not static. Our theological education did not cease when we received our degrees. Rather, our theological education must be a continual process, a process marked by increasing sensitivity to how God acts to meet the needs of persons, and a process marked by continual scholarly study. The ultimate compliment to be paid to the Divinity School is that it equipped us with the tools to do precisely that kind of on-going theological education.

If we are to stand in the heritage of the aims and purposes of the Divinity School, we dare not drop out of the hunt. Lest our anonymous poet above be proven correct, we must constantly hold before us the words of St. Paul:

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus had made me His own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.



LEONARD V. LASSITER, JR., Class of 1978:

At the time of this writing, I have completed only one semester at the Divinity School of Duke University. I found this brief article more difficult to write than I first anticipated. A little statement of background may perhaps demonstrate why I found difficulty.

I was born and raised in Greensboro, North Carolina. I received my primary education in the still somewhat segregated public schools of Greensboro. I never considered this to be a drawback, however, because most of my teachers were of a quality exceeded by none, period! I graduated from Dudley Senior High School in the stormy year, 1969. It was during this time that many predominantly white colleges and universities, particularly those in the South, began heavily recruiting Black students. It was also during this time that I passed up my first opportunity to attend Duke.

I ultimately settled into North Carolina A&T State University, majoring in history. As a person who can and will be highly critical when occasion calls for it, I can say with complete candor and total honesty that I feel that I acquired the finest undergraduate education possible in this part of the country.

Few professors, particularly those in my field, history, would allow a student to become complacent with his or her work. Black studies, a big issue on many predominantly white campuses, was smoothly worked into the total curriculum, not just history or literature, but in all aspects of academic life. Being Black was considered a normal element in the makeup of society, and was treated as such. However, we were constantly made aware of the challenges that face us and that only getting by would no longer suffice in functioning in our ever changing society. We were being prepared to meet those challenges. We were being prepared to compete for and function in jobs. We were being prepared for graduate school, and being provided with a background so that we could do well.

I can imagine that, by now, you are wondering what all this has to do with my relationship with Duke. I hope now to provide some insight into that question. When I graduated from A&T, a

friend of mine, a close friend of mine, said something to me that hurt me deeply. I did fairly well at A&T and he did equally well here at Duke. He stated that, in his opinion, not only could "anyone" attend A&T, "anyone" could attend and do well. It was at that moment that I think I first began to appreciate my choice of schools. I had gotten a top quality education, but I had not forgotten who I was, where I came from, and at the same time had kept my sights on what was important for improving myself toward my goals and aspirations. Only I, and of course the others who had done well at A&T, knew what we had done to earn our honors.

However, we knew, probably better than anyone else, that we could not just rest on those honors. We knew that in a world of distorted prejudices a "summa cum laude" from A&T, or any other predominantly Black institution, would mean little in relation to a "summa cum laude" from schools such as Duke. This gave me a little added drive, so that I could in effect tell the world that I had beaten the system. If I ever make anything of myself, I can say to our American society: look, I attended your segregated schools, I was educated at an inferior Black state-supported college, my family and friends have accepted inferior jobs and subhuman wages for a second place in our equal American society, but I am still able to look you straight in the eye and tell you that I can do anything you can do, and do it sometimes better. And I will not be satisfied until total eye contact has been made. The days of the browbeaten are numbered.

Just as no longer shall I accept number two and be satisfied, no longer will *we* accept number two and be satisfied. I will be doing no one any favor if I claw my way to the top and leave my family at a sub-level. It is my opinion that over the past century Blacks in this country have been building a ladder. It started from the bottom, and it is my responsibility, with spirit willing, to serve as another step toward the top. It is just a pity that it was ever necessary for a ladder to be built, and even more pitiful that that ladder has not been completed.

So, if these are my sentiments, why did I ever come to the Divinity School of Duke University? First of all, I do not operate on the premise that all white people are evil. That bit of open-mindedness at least opened the door. Second, after careful examination and comparison of seminary curricula and programs, I was thoroughly convinced that Duke offered the best program. I had made a serious error in judgment before, and I wanted to be

absolutely certain that I did not make that error again. Third, while deficiencies in resources can be overcome, as demonstrated in Blacks becoming successful in spite of segregated schools, facilities, etc., Duke offered such vast resources and excellence in staffing that denying myself these resources would be tantamount to intentionally breaking a leg before a race. And fourth, there is an attitude and presence of mind. As indicated previously, it is important to me to remember just who I am and where I come from. I know there have been many people who have made many sacrifices so that I might have the opportunity to attend a school such as Duke. With these roots in mind, I find little difficulty and few conflicts in pursuing my education here. It's important to me to be not just a good preacher, but a good minister as well.

In my first semester, I have found the courses to be challenging, the instructors to be fair, and the administration to be concerned. But what has impressed me the greatest are the people here. People as persons, not as students, not as instructors, but as persons. There seems to be a bridge linking us all together, Black and White, male and female, student and instructor. From that bridge, it is my hope to add another step to the ladder toward an equal and coherent society.

Ecumenism and Some Currents of Theology Today

by ROBERT E. CUSHMAN

Research Professor of Systematic Theology

It will be recalled that the late Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, before his death in 1945, expressed the judgment that the advancing ecumenical movement seemed to him "the great new fact of our time." He meant, of course, "the great new fact" for Christendom. To this movement William Temple had, for a generation, devoted his great talents as theologian and churchman.

I raise the question whether developments of the past thirty years sustain the measure of promise which Temple entertained regarding both the advance and the achievement of ecumenism. Admittedly the question is many-sided in import and involves a wide range of factors that cannot be explored in one sitting. So let it be understood that our assessment of the evidence must be incomplete, and far more in the nature of an inquiry than of a conclusion—yet I think an inquiry worth making.

It is worth making because, while it is notoriously difficult to assess one's own time—since it is in flux and never quite in focus—it is, nevertheless, necessary to take our bearings for charting our course in a sea of change, especially if we are to try to be responsible churchmen and churchwomen in our generation. Today in theology, furthermore, the question is pressing: responsible to whom—God or man?

I

First, then, I would like to register some impressions respecting the state of recent and present-day ecumenism, and, secondly, consider some explanations for the impressions I have concerning the state of health of the ecumenical movement today. These explanations will involve reference to the theological climate, especially as this climate affects and finds expression in the "life and work" of the churches. I do not pretend that there are not *other* factors of influence in addition to theological trends, e.g., sociological, economic, and political, that also affect the health of the ecu-

menical movement. I judge the ecumenical movement to be, at center, a thrust toward the reunion of Christendom.

As to my impressions, I register the judgment that the thrust of the ecumenical movement in the twenty years between 1945 and 1965 was steadily forward, from the establishment of the World Council of Churches in 1948 and the Lund Conference of 1952 onward to the Montreal Conference of 1963, and that it climaxed in the Second Vatican Council. I judge Vatican II to be an essential outworking of the ecumenical movement and, in fact, a climatic part of it. I also have the impression that since Vatican II the movement, having reached a high plateau, has subsequently suffered a decline of both interest and power. This I judge from many indices such as the failure of the Anglican-Methodist Conversations in England (1973) and the bogged-down, if still hopeful, deliberations that doggedly persist in the circles of our Consultation on Church Union in this country. For this latter project, in the direction of organic union among Protestant churches, I perceive no alleviation of the apathy of the "grass-roots" since 1971 and, partly, because the *rationale* of such union is both unperceived and unconvincing to the generality of church people. Behind this, perhaps, stands the long unfinished business of the Oberlin Conference (1957) that raised but never supplied a clear or cogent answer to the question about "the *nature* of the unity we seek."

Strategically and tactically considered, it is my impression—however unpopular with a now established ecumenical bureaucracy—that moves toward large scale organic union "jump the gun" on the still unsettled issue of the *nature* of the unity for which historically separated churches *can* at this juncture be ready—however needful, even urgent, may be recovery of a more united Christendom. I put the matter this way because I agree heartily with William Temple on the long-range significance of the ecumenical movement. Its emergence in the early 20th century may, in the wisdom of God, yet prove to be the great new promise of World Christianity in its mission of Christ to the world. Meanwhile, today, the ecumenical movement has lost vitality and, for some, is passing, so to speak, under a cloud or has stalled in a climate of some little distraction and confusion, as both among and within the churches.

The remainder of this discussion will seek to comment upon one large factor in this confusion, namely, some theological trends and ideological distractions of the day, which, in my view, have had a diversionary influence upon ecumenical thought and enter-

prise and are international in scope. They bear directly upon both the nature of the church and the conception of both the nature and the way of salvation. In fact, they challenge and notably reject older ways of viewing salvation itself. And these trends are represented both within Protestant and Roman Catholic circles at home and abroad.

II

It is my premise, in the following account of some aspects of current theology, that the ecumenical movement from around 1920 to 1960 was favored by a rising curve of theological or doctrinal consensus, interdenominational and international in scope. It was undergirded by a renaissance in Biblical studies—first Protestant and then Catholic—that provided a powerful and constructive background for collaboration at the level of practical churchmanship. If we must, we can “tag” it, but at the risk of oversimplification, as a revival of classical Christian theology which some called “neo-orthodoxy.” And we can identify the period, roughly, as the forty years between 1920 and 1960.

My second premise would be that since 1960 the noted undergirding emergent doctrinal consensus has dwindled and that its place has been taken by a variety of militant theological platforms both to the “right” and to the “left.” To a great extent both are non-ecclesiological in temper—the “left” of high visibility, vehement sociological awareness, and socio-therapeutic concern.

As a species, the movements of the “left” may possibly be grouped together under the general title “renewal theology,” whose criterion of truth is “relevance”; or perhaps, better, they may be described methodologically as falling under the caption “contextual theology.” By the latter is meant that what is taken to have survival value in Christian faith is what is required of it, or relevant in it, to meet the real or avowed needs of mankind in its life in this world, and now.

Let me attempt a sketch of this species of current religious thought by examining a principal source and some “spinoffs.” Of its current general aspect let this characterization of Melvin Maddocks from the editorial page of the *Daily American*, published in Rome for September 20, 1975, be introductory:

The very word theology seems to be an embarrassment these days . . . In short, theology appears to be of value only as it becomes a partner—and a junior partner at that—to an ideology of the moment. With an eagerness that can sometimes be courageous, sometimes plain embarrassing, theology has hitchhiked on board all the “revolutions” from civil rights

to sexual. Almost apologetically the men and women of God have begged leave from the arbiters of the time—the psychologists, the sociologists—to contribute a ‘religious dimension’ to whatever the problem in hand.

Having described the apparent syndrome, Maddocks asks: “Do the men and women of God have no options except either to fade into obsolescence. . . . Or else to become a pathetic me-too tag-along of all the new paganisms?”

That I take to be a fair question. Let us review in part the emergence and the development of this “theological” standpoint, that seems to thrive by riding the waves of popular dissent pertaining to some *bona fide* unresolved ills of our time. Let us remember, too, that the viewpoint of these theologies is primarily contextual. The contextual standpoint is a way of thinking. One way to put it is: the world of human affairs is chaotic and needs management; has Christianity anything relevant to offer? Can we use it effectually to meet and resolve the problems of human life today? What this turns out to be is veridical Christian doctrine.

III

Casting one’s eye over the spectrum of recent Christian thought, I judge it was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as rediscovered and interpreted in the mid-fifties, whose *Letters and Papers from Prison* brought the principle of “contextuality” into startling currency as a theological principle. What was done *with* Bonhoeffer is not necessarily to be identified fully with his own intentions. That will forever be debatable. His final words to his contemporaries were necessarily cryptic, and he was afforded no opportunity for subsequent explication.

It is fairly clear that Bonhoeffer was committed to the view that man finds God and is found of him in the inescapable moral decisions of historical human existence. (His followers have said: *only* in these.) Accordingly, it is clear also that he was impatient with all interpretations of Christian faith that tolerated indifference to the human state of affairs wherein God acts. The theology of the day, in either the Barthian or Bultmannian form, propagated, it seemed to Bonhoeffer, an irresponsible other-worldly eschatology that was really unbiblical.

In the early forties he faced and made a decision for tyrannicide, and this too was in starkest contrast with historic Lutheran Church policy and practice of non-adjudication and/or interference with the affairs of State. But these affairs were in 1940 in the hands of monsters and had reached a level of demonic depravity that, for

Bonhoeffer, could no longer go unopposed. He evidently became a co-conspirator for assassination of Hitler.

Bonhoeffer's *Letters* covertly explicate and, perhaps, even understandably rationalize his momentous, utterly dedicated, but, to him, morally terrifying decision for this paradoxical Christian vocation. It was the *context* that commanded what was required of Christian discipleship, and it was costly.

Dying a hero in the cause of apparent righteousness, he became, perhaps, by accident of history rather than by intention, the martyred progenitor in modern times of something like Christian revolutionary action and, at least, an implicit ethic of Christian revolution. In addition, as a critic of all self-maintaining and vocationally moribund ecclesiasticism, he seemed to many—stirred by his total dedication—to foster what became the new, and still widely prevailing, dogma of “religionless Christianity.” While much was doubtless packed into this phrase by Bonhoeffer, what was unpacked was mainly threefold: 1) a presumed contempt for cloistered worship of the altar; 2) a presumed irrelevancy of justification by faith as the way of salvation; and 3) a conception of Christian mission wholly dedicated to societal renovation as the purpose of God for history and the real meaning of Christian eschatology.

Attending these propositions were corollaries that seemed to commend themselves for serious and questing Christians who came under Bonhoeffer's influence and mystique. One of them of wide acceptance was a budding conception of the Church that flourished first among Dutch theologians. Rightly understood, the Church is wholly and essentially *mission* and not soul-saving in the traditional senses. The emphasis here was captioned later in the title of J. C. Hoekendijk's book, *The Church Inside Out* (1964) and echoed by Colin Williams' *Where in the World?*, that is, where *in* the world is the Church? (1963). The latter study, while not an official publication of the National Council of Churches, was an outgrowth of New Delhi's (1961) call for a long range study of “evangelism and mission” on the premise that “the present form of church life is a major hindrance to . . . evangelism”—a word notoriously undefined! Both these volumes supported the view that the vocation of the Church and of the Christian individual is to be *in* the world—where the action is. To de-ghettoize the Church came to be viewed as the pre-eminent task of the day and the justifying rationale for being truly Christian.

A second corollary accompanied these findings with the positive

program that the mission of the Church is to "let the world provide the agenda." F. D. Davies, writing in his *Dialogue With the World* (London, 1967), understands mission "as the term which describes the activity of God in the world" (p. 10). Mission is the work of reconciliation, he thinks, and is concerned with "overcoming industrial disputes, surmounting class divisions, with the eradication of racial discrimination" (p. 14). Evangelism that is concerned with conversion and "individual salvation" not only creates a "religious enclave" but perpetuates a non-Christian dualism between the sacred and profane—a view which became dogma for many and still is.

A third corollary may be summarily stated. It has to do with the *how* of mission in the megalopolitan society. High in the list of ways and means, according to Harvey Cox, is "the stewardship of power." To this exercise the Church is invited, whether it take the form of Black Power or, possibly, Gay power, or Women's Lib power. Or, with greater plausibility among some present-day Latin American expositors, it may implement violent revolutionary political power in the cause of justice to the oppressed masses stubbornly deferred. Having attained to this stage, of course, theology may with candor be called, as it now is by some protagonists, "political theology," or more euphemistically, "liberation theology." Allied with these are "third," and lately, "fourth world theology." We now seem to arrive at the point in theology of which Melvin Maddocks, as we noted, both chided and complained, viz., "theology has hitchhiked on board all the 'revolutions' from civil rights to sexual." Nor, perhaps, is it strange, therefore, that the "quota system," applied to theology, has pluralized the subject very nearly beyond recognition. Indeed, it becomes increasingly doubtful that its full-time practitioners can agree on what it is *about*.

Such in briefest sketch is the course and shape of the so-called "renewal theology," which has wide journalistic billing among us, and which may be said, I believe, to find its inspiration, in part, from Bonhoeffer's somewhat ambiguous apologetic for "religionless Christianity." In his personal and profoundly moral agony, Bonhoeffer, I believe, was obliged to understand organized Christianity not as any end in itself nor, as so often in German Lutheran orthodoxy and other, as largely the means of Grace for strictly personal salvation; rather, he was obliged to understand its social vocation in action. Granted his irrevocable commitment and his open-eyed expectancy of the maximum and immanent "cost of discipleship" for himself, he could scarcely fail to accent his well-established con-

viction that the business of the Church and the Christian vocation, in such a world as this, is a call to alliance with God in the spirit of the Hebrew prophets, in the renovation of human history. It was for this that he had left England, returned to his homeland in 1941, and made his ultimate and morally terrifying decision to which the late Bishop Bell of Chichester was privy. He had found Old Testament prophecy replete with the vision of moral vocation under God. Every passage of Old Testament prophecy taught that fidelity to God's will was *always contextual*, had the world of human affairs for its context, and that its demands were both categorical and costly.

So Peter Berger got the message and in the late fifties, in *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies*, could easily fasten, as had the Social Gospel before him, upon Isaiah 1:13f: "Bring no more vain oblations . . . I cannot away with iniquity *and* the solemn meeting . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of our doings . . . cease to do evil, learn to do well . . ." Accordingly, Berger exposed the moral irrelevancy of the churches and justifiably, if with commendable discrimination, urged a de-ghettoizing of the life and work of the Church. Shortly, Gibson Winter made a by-word of "the suburban captivity of the churches," deplored the case, and asked for speedy remedy. A flood of literature followed supportively—pamphleteering on the same themes. These were to become obsessive and, for many, continue to be so and with a ramifying program, anti-intellectual in temper, and usually indifferent to or disdainful of the uses of worship and the intramural life of the Christian community. In the sixties the "parish" was out of bounds for serious ministry.

It is not, perhaps, a needful part of my business in this brief paper to assess critically the substance of "contextual" or "renewal theology" as a theological movement. Our interest is directed rather to the impact of contemporary theological trends upon the now quiescent ecumenical movement. Yet the impact can be better understood if we attempt to summarize the import of this theology and so be better positioned to calculate its implications for that movement.

One thing is quite fundamental, although it is often tacitly presupposed and expounded openly mainly by the European expositors of this viewpoint, among them Metz and Moltmann. What is involved here is an "anti-metaphysical" philosophy or theology of history. Bonhoeffer was evidently already moving in this direction. We might say that, with some, history *is* reality and the

primary, perhaps solitary, province of the divine-human encounter. Bluntly stated, history is the scene where man meets God *as* ultimate vocation apart from all questions of a hereafter. From this comes the disposition to retire a difference between the sacred and profane, the worldly and the Transcendent. Renewal theology, therefore, participates deeply in the mood of "Christian secularity" and had as logical outcome the "death of God" theology. The point for us may be that renewal theology tends to repudiate the Augustinian conception of "the city of God" as opposed to "the earthly city," together with any remnants of the view that the Christian Church represents on earth its heavenly proto-type or is, in an eschatological sense, the pilgrim people of God for whom heaven is their home, as Cyprian first emphasized.

A second thing to observe is that, in sundry measure and degree, each of the varieties of renewal or contextual theology has a disposition to *reduce theology to ethics*, and, indeed, pretty largely to *social ethics*. In doctrine of the Church, this has the effect of ignoring 'faith and order' and reducing ecclesiology to 'life and work' or to the world's challenge to responsible Christian vocation. Ecclesiologically, as Hoekendijk saw, this *exhausts* the being of the Church in mission, as it also pinpoints its real identity and *raison d'être*.

Thus, for example, in his book *Dialogue With the World*, previously mentioned, F. D. Davies holds that the mission of the Church is to establish "shalom" in the world. He does not say so, but, in the Old Testament, *shalom* means both peace and well-being, or the tranquility of well-being. But, now—watch the language—this *shalom* Davies declares to be a "social happening." Presumably he means a desired state of *human affairs*. It follows that the mission of the Church is a vocation with ethical incentive and, basically, a sociological outcome, named *shalom*—the distinctive mark of the earthly Kingdom of God.

Yet one must comment that in the Old Testament *shalom* also may be equated with personal as well as social salvation, or is the sign of salvation. Yet in the Old Testament this fullness of life or salvation is never *simply* a positive "social happening." To be sure, it is not without its sociality. It is a communal happening, symbolized by covenant, and one to which a transcendent God is partner. It is, therefore, never "secular," contrary to Davies, but always an eschatological event that invokes the transcendent reference to the Creator. Therefore it is precisely the "sacred" in the midst of time and change and man's resilient profaneness.

Let us examine this thinking a little more closely, since this view of Davies that salvation is a "social happening" is greatly characteristic of renewal theology. If salvation is a "social happening," then we may infer—and indeed Davies encourages us to do so—that this "social happening" is an obligation of the serious Christian. Leaving aside the question of adequacy of our qualifications for this high calling, must we not suppose that it is something that can be managed or maneuvered by psychological and sociological know-how, provided we marshall the required means? Among the means, then, might be sundry power maneuvers. This was the business of the sixties! Could not these be given a measure of legitimacy by invoking the phrase "stewardship of power"? It has a New Testament ring, and we could prosecute the cause under higher authority and with something of the dignity of a divine calling like Amos.

If we inquire more narrowly into the nature of the "social happening" or salvation which prompts our vocation as Christians, we find a remarkable readiness to equate its substance or content with relief from *whatever* impairs or obstructs being "truly human," or attaining that fulfillment that belongs to man by nature. At this point, we do not seem to be far from the Jeffersonian principle of the inalienable right of all men and women, and others, "to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" or to their chosen style of life. In short, the *desideratum* that should prompt the Christian vocation in this school of thought is usually the vindication of justice and right to be "truly human." The "social happening" to which our vocation is devoted usually does not, however, embrace the "counsels of perfection" of the Sermon on the Mount! So, while Christian vocation is reduced to ethics, it is also reduced, as I read the literature, to liberation of the all-too-human, or the induction of the "have-nots" into the well furnished community of the "me-toos."

A third and final characteristic of renewal theology in some of its forms may be mentioned only briefly, however important. I mentioned just now the question of our *qualifications* for this mission and vocation that is laid upon us as Christians. I think it is fair to say that contextual theology as a whole has nothing much to say of sin. That is now left to Karl Menninger! Accordingly, it looks askance at anything like conversion, denigrates what it calls proselytism, neglects preaching, and is all but silent either about the sacraments as means of grace or, likewise, what went under the title justification by faith in Pauline, Lutheran, or Wes-

leyan usage. We can, it then appears, vocate from just where we are on condition of motivation.

This is to say in other words that this "theology"—largely untroubled by sin—is ordinarily very short on the Reformation *theologia crucis* and in complete accord with its own logic. The work of Christ in the forgiveness of sins and the Pauline newness of life, that once supplied a dimension of transcendence, is a resource for which the contextualist does not, regularly, experience a pressing need. And, furthermore, one of the reasons is that his view of the context of existence is such that evil has become mostly *externalized*. For him man, or woman, or other, is much more nearly a *victim* of circumstances rather than that he is, himself, the problem. Accordingly, nothing is plainer than that "justification by grace through faith" tends to recede as a legalistic archaism, and the historic means of grace—conceived as in the keeping of the Church—are *irrelevant* to the real problems and issues of man's life in history, which are taken to be external or environmental.

From all of this it should begin to appear what is meant by contextualism in theology. What it amounts to is a method for sifting out the expendable in the Christian tradition and retaining what is salvageable because it is relevant, by adopted standards of human need, taken from the prevailing psychological, sociological, and ethical consensus of the age.

Without hesitancy we may say that this theology is by method and intent a *species* of age-old Christian apologetics, the besetting temptation of which has always been, since the first century, to acquire self-assurance about the Faith by equating it with some *au courant* wisdom of the world and so be justified.

IV

Now then, if we ask how this line of thinking checks out with the earlier ecumenical movement, the answers are not hard to come by.

In the first place, the ecumenical movement retained—as Vatican II explicitly reaffirmed—the New Testament view of the Church as "the pilgrim people of God"; it retained as axiomatic the polar dialectic between the wisdom of God in Christ and the wisdom of men; it would view as apostate dissolving the sacred into the profane, and regard as heretical the reduction of the theology of the cross to ethics. It would regard with profound suspicion any conception of Christian vocation unshaped and unempowered either by justifying faith or the sacramental means of grace. And Faith

and Order at Lund in 1952 or Oberlin in 1957 would have agreed.

In the second place, whereas the ecumenical movement was, at the center, cutting its teeth and wrestling with problems of "faith and order" while not leaving "life and work" unattended, contextual theology is wholly engrossed in "life and work" and largely indifferent and sometimes contemptuous of most matters relating to "faith and order." The latter concerns tend to be regarded as irrelevant to real human problems. Faith is known by its works, and concerns for order—polity, ministry, and the means of grace—bespeak a ghettoized Christianity preoccupied with itself rather than with human affairs that cry out for better management and alleviation. Moreover, if the Church is not "the communion of the saints" but, primarily, a handy instrument of social amelioration and control, then its destiny is not to preserve its identifiable unity but to make itself unnecessary in whole-souled identification with the world's renovation. Behind these fascinating half-truths lies the premise, with the serious expositors, that History is all the reality there is and that, in its perfecting, God is "aborning" and, perhaps, that Christians are stewards of "the future of God." In short, this theology recurrently shows the signs of a "Christianized" humanism.

One might go on, if you were not already overtaxed and time were not finite in its *given* manifestations. What it comes to with reference to the earlier ecumenical movement may be this: In the perspective of renewal or contextual theology, in some of its current varieties, the faith and order segment of the ecumenical movement is patently rendered banal and superfluous. Practically all that remains is life and work. But this, in turn, is reduced to the status of an ethical vocation with sociological ends that has hardly any grounding in what either historic Protestantism or Catholicism has understood by Christian faith or its foundation.

If and so far as these things are true and indicate something of the theological climate of this time, then it is so far understandable why it may be true that the earlier ecumenical movement is presently passing under a cloud. Finally, in the light of such theological developments as we have briefly surveyed, the question emerges as to what could justify the older thrust of the ecumenical movement toward the reunion of the churches, *i.e.*, if the churches have as their mission to make themselves unnecessary in a world destined to secularize the sacred in that far off divine event—"the future of God"—toward which the whole "creation" presumably moves?

The Bible in Pastoral Counseling

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I. Introduction

Pastoral Counseling, a specialization within the broader field of pastoral care, has deep Biblical and historical roots. An historical perspective on pastoral care¹ indicates that nothing proposed in our time to care for troubled souls is really new, yet paradoxically each pastoral act is and always has been fresh, distinct, and un-repeatable, a uniquely personal event with its own unique conditions.

Caring for troubled people, met historically within the Church, has been challenged and enriched by fresh perspectives and insights from the behavioral sciences and by those across several disciplines identified as psychotherapists. While there have been other transition periods calling for the integration of divergent perspectives from within ministry as well as from without, the task of maintaining historical continuity and professional identity while integrating insights from other traditions has never seemed more challenging than at present.

Drawing increasingly upon the insights and methodology of psychotherapy, pastoral care faces several dangers. As Daniel Day Williams points out,² a sectarian gospel of psychological healing may be substituted for the Christian message of salvation through God's grace. Paul Pruyser³ sees a tendency among contemporary pastoral care and counseling specialists to neglect and denigrate the many pastoral resources which the Church has accumulated over the centuries. He calls us to a "pastoral enabling ministry" whereby the ministry of the laity is mobilized, developed, and challenged to provide mutual caring ministries. Gibson Winter warns⁴ that one-to-one caring relationships often obscure the pastoral function of the Church as a fellowship and often turn clergy away from working for that kind of fellowship in Christ.

II. A Theology of Pastoral Care and Counseling

Pastoral care, as Carroll Wise defines it, is ". . . the art of communicating the inner meaning of the Gospel to persons at the

point of their need.”⁵ The Gospel was embodied in a Person whose relationship with persons is the redemptive, reconciling relationship which God offers all persons. John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” II Cor. 5:10: “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” And, as Alan Richardson points out, “After the death and resurrection of Jesus the content of the Gospel, as it is understood by the Apostolic Church, is Christ Himself.”⁶

The Church and ministry have as reason for being their role as vehicles for the re-enactment and continuation in time and history of Christ’s ministry.

. . . it is not easy verbalisms about the Gospel, but the Spirit of Christ incarnate in a man which is the deepest and most effective form of communication of the Gospel today. This level of communication is the core of pastoral care, and should find expression through all of the activities of the pastor.⁷

People suffer not only in estrangement from God as the ground of their being, but also in estrangement from others in whom their being is partially grounded. They suffer the damaging, distorting, dehumanizing experiences with significant others, those who gave birth to them, whose responses they need to survive in order to become warm, responsive, responsible human beings. But these significant others are not always loving, caring, supporting; they are at times frustrating, disapproving, angry, rejecting; in short, they are both good and bad. People tend to split or wall off others, or aspects of others whose presence brought pain. In so doing they split or wall off those aspects of themselves related to and dependent upon others for development. Thus alienation occurs both with others and, more profoundly, within. People seek more than support during their wanderings in the wilderness—they seek a way back to others and to themselves.

Each person is engaged in a double search: to find ways of avoiding anxiety and other painful emotions, that is, to avoid being reminded of unmet needs, hurts, pains; and to find ways of having these needs met at last. As a result, each person relates to others conflictually, fearful of yet longing to find a someone.

So the dramas, whether the Divine-Human drama or the human-human drama, parallel each other; each has its human situations, with its alienation and anxiety, and each has its hope for someone to overcome that condition. And the two dramas interact, for the alienating, distorting factors in one drama carry over into the other.

Following MacQuarrie,⁸ the more a symbol participates in per-

sonhood the more relevant it is to this hope. The symbol which is the most relevant is the symbol which most nearly overcomes the split between reality and representation. For the individual seeking to be a person that symbol is a person. A person, as a symbol, has more potential to represent the realities essential to personhood than a non-person symbol. Christ becomes such a powerful symbol because his participation in humanity illuminates our being and, at the same time, God's being. Christ embodies those realities which support our being. The most succinct statement on the fusion of symbol with reality without loss of integrity of either is contained in John 1:14a, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

Christ becomes the one and the model for all those who, in His name, would overcome the alienation between God and man and among man and within man. John 10:30: "I and the Father are one." Matt. 25:40b: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." John 17:23: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

"What then," writes Daniel Day Williams, "does it mean to be saved? It means to have one's life in all its good and evil, its hope and brokenness, restored to participation in the love of God."⁹ Salvation, as healing and wholeness, is a new relationship to God and neighbor and self in which the damaging effects of anxiety, fear, anger, and guilt, which contribute to alienation and distortion, are overcome. We are using the term salvation in two ways: as deliverance from personal and interpersonal distortion and as the reclamation of all life in relation to God. The good news is that another comes to us, lives with us, overcomes the alienation and estrangement among us and, perhaps more profoundly, within us.

A theological statement on pastoral care is not pastoral care; pastoral care is a living relationship in which reconciling love and healing are manifest. This living relationship is understood, theologically, as the work of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God in Christ, reaching out to the human spirit. It is not enough to tell people that grace is available for them; rather the pastor must be to them a person through whom a measure of grace is experienced.

III. The Bible as Symbol

The Bible has overwhelming symbolic strength for many people. In turn, it contains rich symbols including myths, which are de-

velopments and elaborations of word symbols into story form. As a noun, *Symbolon* referred to a custom of hospitality whereby the Greek host would give a departing guest a broken off half of a ring or coin, two parts to be matched on some future occasion, with each part in the meantime representing the experience of entertainment, of continuing friendship, and of the anticipated return.

We may speak of the power of a symbol in two ways: (1) Its ability to represent, to make present what is meaningful in experience—that is, to represent the experience and its meaning; (2) Its ability to orient or point the individual toward experiences which would, in turn, revitalize the symbol. The symbol stands before us both to represent our experiencing and to draw us toward experiences which underscore and therefore re-live and re-vitalize the symbol. Religious symbols become dead when their dynamic relationship with the realities of life experiences is lost. The Pharisees, in the days of Jesus, had developed religion largely as a ceremonial tradition devoid of meaning in terms of vital life processes. Religious symbols, when taken literally, lose the dynamic relationship between symbol and inner reality.

When taken literally, a symbol becomes powerless to effect new integrations within the personality. A symbol may structure an inner process which makes a healthy adjustment to life impossible and thereby fosters illness. For example, a young female patient whose particular god was identified as her father lived with a god symbol which structured an inner process which interfered with her marriage because it condemned her for having sexual relations with her husband. Symbols may be used to serve the forces of concealment, the forces of repression, the forces of denial. "God's will" as a verbal religious symbol may be used to expand our understanding of the nature and meaning of life and to order that life under God; it may also be used to avoid thoughts, to suppress and seal off feelings, to maintain a narrow understanding of life.

As Rollo May points out, ". . . contemporary man suffers from the deterioration and breakdown of the central symbols in western culture."¹⁰ Religion is called upon to discover anew the meaning of life, to embody that meaning in symbols that may be intelligible and powerful to modern man. In this task, Carroll Wise reminds us¹¹ we do not lack for laboratory situations. Our ghettos, civil disorders, mental hospitals, general hospitals, conflicted personal and family situations, are laboratories established at considerable

cost to lay bare errors in patterns of living, to discover anew the meaning of life, to develop powerful symbols, to revitalize old symbols, to provide more effective means of ministry.

The critical moments in human existence cry out to be heard, to be given meaning, to be shared with another, to be responded to. The Bible offers symbols for such moments. In turn, those for whom religious symbols are empty and powerless may turn to critical moments to recapture the meaning of life and its resources in symbols. The Christian faith seeks those experiences in which the eternal Logos is re-embodied. The Church cannot take refuge behind the symbol of word, object, or ritual—these must become for us more than ghosts of once-living truth.

As indicated, the Bible has overwhelming symbolic strength. The Bible has the power to evoke responses of fear, awe, reverence. For some, the Bible has the power of a fetish to neutralize demonic forces and serves as armor to ward off and protect against dangers—physical, psychological, spiritual—from without as well as from within. It may represent past as well as present relationships, thus putting the person in touch with those to whom he belongs, from whom he draws support. To the “cloud of witnesses” referred to in the Bible, each person adds his own from his personal life history. Some of these may actually be inscribed formally in the front of his Bible as family history, others are inscribed in memory and evoked by the presence of the Bible. To a patient, deaf, near death, the Bible identifies the visitor as a minister, and the act of reading from the Bible, though he hears not the spoken words, brings him into a fellowship of concern in the midst of suffering and the threat of death.

IV. Biblical Discussions as Precounseling

Some pastoral counseling opportunities will grow out of Bible-focused experiences, whether in worship and preaching, formal Bible study, or informal private Bible reading. The issues which bring the parishioner to the pastor are likely, in such instances, to be identified in the language of the Bible as a scriptural rather than a personal issue, a question of Biblical understanding rather than of self-understanding. In Hiltner's terms¹² such conversations might more accurately be identified as pre-counseling.

The person-centered pastor, like the Biblical scholar, would not take a passage out of its context and argue it from a “proof-text” position; so neither should a person's Biblical question be considered out of its context, the historical and contemporary life

situation of that person. The pastor would do well to begin where the parishioner begins, the scriptural material, while remaining sensitive to the parishioner's life situation and to the personal thoughts and feelings, the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, which define the person of the parishioner. But the initial definition will usually, if not always, be in terms of the Biblical material, and with the parishioner's elaboration, interpretation, and discussion of that material, thus drawing upon the parishioner's knowledge about the Bible and her understanding of that material. In Mark 10:19, Jesus, in response to the question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" referred to what the questioner knew, from the scriptures, that related to his question.

Sometimes the pastor moves into the personal by asking the parishioner what the Biblical figures might have been experiencing, what they might have been living with, what their thoughts, feelings, hopes, might have been. If not initially, sooner or later the pastor could suggest that the parishioner's own life experiences might be spoken to by the scriptural material, thus moving more directly into personal issues. The pastor could offer tentative "clarifying" responses which assume that the parishioner might have this thought or that feeling, this concern or that, as an effort to translate Biblical and/or impersonal language into personal language and related to what is known or surmised about the parishioner's life situation. Another phase in this process of Biblical and self-exploration is the identification and clarification of "dilemmas," the conflicting thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs which lie behind the interest and concern of the parishioner, whether defined in the context and language of the Bible or that of the parishioner's personal life. Finally, it is important that the identified dilemma be redefined in such a way that the question points toward an answer, the problem as restated points toward a solution, that movement toward a response, a plan of action, a decision or position is identified and supported. To the patient who says, "We're not to question God's will," the response might be, "While you are uneasy about doing it, you have some questions to ask about all of this," thus providing support and direction as pastor and parishioner move into an area of concern. The least that can be done at times is to suggest that the two of you continue to "mull over" the issues and talk again at a specified time later. Jacob wrestled all through the night and people may need to wrestle with, in a sense let themselves be troubled by, a scriptural

passage or a life issue for a while before they are able to live into the answer to their questions.

The person's selective interest in scripture leaves clues concerning what is meaningful to him, where the important areas of his emotional life, including his pain, are to be found, that is, where his sources of anxiety lie and how he deals with them.

Oates¹³ reports the case of a hospital patient whose psychiatrist diagnosed her problem to arise from feelings of inadequacy in her estimate of herself as a woman, as a sexual partner, and as a social being. She was frightened by her thoughts, cursing God and weighed down by self-derogatory statements, including the belief that she had committed the unpardonable sin. The girl felt guilty about having married and having moved away from her mother, who had been a mental patient in a state hospital. She also felt inferior to her mother-in-law and incapable of winning her husband's affections away from his mother. In the intimacy of sexual relations she was frigid. She said that she thought of herself as the wicked servant in the parable of the talents, as having buried her gifts, as having a master who was too hard for her. She wanted to submit to him but didn't seem able to do so fully. As indicated in the analysis of this case, the "buried gifts" could indicate the picture she had of herself as an inadequate marital partner. The master in the drama was undoubtedly the husband who had replaced God in her life. Her marital life must have seemed similar to that of one living with idols, implicit in her reference to II Cor. 6, which she made in the fifth interview with a minister. She asked, "What does that Scripture mean when it says that men and women should not be married who are unequally yoked together with unbelievers?"

V. General Considerations

A. *The Setting*

There are several extrinsic factors to be considered in using the Bible in pastoral counseling. Among these are the context in which the counseling takes place, the level of Biblical literacy on the part of the counselee, and his expectations concerning the use of scriptural and other formal religious resources. Within the parish context, the counselor-counselee relationship occurs as part of a larger on-going relationship between minister and parishioner in which the Bible is frequently a reference in, if not the basis for, conversation, whether in worship, preaching, church school, or Bible study. The situation is quite different when counselor and

counselee, whether in a parish setting or in that of a pastoral counseling center or mental health clinic, have not or are not also engaged in non-counseling Biblically-related conversations. Furthermore, the level of Biblical literacy or sophistication varies from counselee to counselee. For some, the Bible has the familiarity of a home to which they return easily and comfortably and with shared understanding; for others, the Bible is a foreign land, unknown, holding little or no interest as a place to visit. In like manner, the expectation of the counselees concerning the use of the Bible varies from those who consider a counseling conversation incomplete without a reference to the Bible to those who would consider such a reference an intrusion at least, and even resented if it was viewed as taking advantage of a request for personal help to evangelize or proselyte.

B. Common Concerns

There are problems to be faced when the Bible is used in pastoral counseling. Among these are the following:

(1) The Bible may create or intensify an authoritarian climate in tension with the non-authoritarian, non-judgmental, permissive climate which the pastor may be attempting to create. The parishioner may expect that the Bible, like the Church and the office of minister, carry the weight of an authority which will advise or order, inform or instruct, judge or condemn, to which he must relate passively, submissively, and obediently. For some, the Bible will be viewed basically as a book of laws, a collection of "thou shalts" and "thou shalt nots" which prescribe rules for living. Frequently the selective and literal interpretation of Bible passages reflects this legalism. Note for example ethical dilemmas involving anger (Matt. 5:21-26), sexual desires (Matt. 5:27-30), divorce (Matt. 5:31, 32, and 19:9), homosexuality (Rom. 1:26-32 and I Cor. 6:9), and abortion (Exodus 20:13). A Biblical interpretation that seeks the spirit rather than the letter of the scripture, which transcends a legalistic morality to develop one of freedom and responsible decision making, is the more difficult way.

(2) Scripture verses, however brief and focused, carry a freight of meaning, a symbolic overload which is more than the experience of the moment conveys and which may be more than the person is able to deal with at the moment. As Rogers¹⁴ has indicated, an aim of psychotherapy is to let each experience tell us its meaning. The usual alternative is to distort experiences to fit the meanings already assigned. For example, the person committed to the belief

that he hates his parents has to distort or deny any feelings of warmth and affection. In pastoral counseling, symbols which grow out of the person's experiencing rather than those offered from outside that immediate experiencing seem more accurate, more sharply and personally focused, and more powerful. For example, one client used the recovery of a plant in my office as the symbol representing her hope for her own renewal.

(3) The use of the Bible, however well-intentioned, may at times support and reinforce destructive processes operative in a person's life. Oates¹⁵ describes the case of a man who went to his pastor in acute anxiety over homosexual thoughts and behavior. The pastor stressed the importance of self-control and gave him a copy of the Bible to read to control his homosexual thoughts and impulses. He also told the man to place the Bible under his pillow to drive away his evil thoughts and dreams and help him get rest. The man was on the verge of an active paranoid state, and the pastor's advice unwittingly reinforced that state and may have hastened his hospitalization.

(4) References to the Bible and specific scriptural passages may move away from experiencing on a feeling level to experiencing on an intellectual or rational level. They may also take the counselee outside her present and historical relationships into another time, place, and set of relationships, into the drama of Biblical scenes, thereby placing distance between herself and her drama.

(5) The Bible may be used to reinforce one's defenses, to reinforce denial, to maintain and strengthen repression, to support fixed beliefs about oneself and others. We do need defenses, of course, but some defenses are less adequate than others and, in certain circumstances, such as during psychotherapy, may need to be challenged, broken through, and dropped or modified, to get to conflicted areas and to achieve conflict resolution. Conceivably, "daily" Bible reading, for all its positive contributions, could for a particular individual, be a ritualistic warding off of anxiety through obsessional-type behavior and a warding off of a psychotherapeutic relationship in particular and personal and social relationships more generally.

These problems and others that could be identified are not presented as inherent in the Bible, but represent misuse of the Bible and its material. Psychic factors are responsible for this misuse, as they are for the misuse of all personal resources. The answer is not to discard the resource, but to work with those factors which interfere with, block, and distort being in touch with and

drawing upon personal and interpersonal resources. Sometimes this means using one's authority as one knowledgeable in the Bible to counter beliefs which bind up rather than free life processes. Sometimes this means identifying Biblical passages which present conflicting opinions and open up, if not force, a broader perspective. Sometimes this means translating Biblical language into personal language. Sometimes this means setting aside the Bible until the exploration of personal life experiences enables one to return to the Bible with fewer personal conflicts to distort the use of the Bible as a resource.

V. The Field of Pastoral Counseling

Pastoral counselors, historically, have had a poor image among professional counselors and psychotherapists. In the "Wizard of Oz," when Dorothy discovered the Wizard was no wizard, she accused him of being a bad man. He said, "No, I am a good man, but a bad wizard." This might be said of many pastoral counselors. They were good men and women but poor counselors. With the development of Clinical Pastoral Education over the past fifty years, ministers so trained have achieved competency as interpersonal caring specialists. In 1964 the American Association of Pastoral Counselors was established. Well grounded in psychodynamic understanding and in psychotherapeutic theory and practice, with a sense of professional calling and desirous of maintaining and promoting standards of professional competency, pastoral counselors organized to establish standards of practice, to set criteria for accrediting pastoral counselors and training programs, and to provide for professional fellowship and professional enrichment. Carl W. Christensen, a psychiatrist teaching in the Departments of Psychiatry at Northwestern Medical School and the University of Illinois writes:

. . . most psychiatrists to whom I've talked concerning pastoral counseling are amazed to learn that the average Garrett-Northwestern graduate pastoral psychotherapist has had more supervision in individual and group therapy than most psychiatrists had during their residence training. And yet, many professional therapists, insurance company adjusters, and government bureaucrats have no concept of pastoral therapy. They tend to equate it with the simple naive counseling of the good shepherd.¹⁶

For a further breakdown of pastoral counseling in terms of models, methods, and objectives, the reader is referred to Howard Clinebell's text, *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling*.¹⁷

VI. Ways of Relating the Bible to Pastoral Counseling

There are at least four identifiable ways of relating the Bible

to pastoral counseling: (1) as a diagnostic tool; (2) as an answer to questions; (3) as a means of identifying and facilitating counseling processes; (4) as a means of identifying and exploring major counseling themes.

A. *The Diagnostic Value of the Bible*

Freud considered dreams as the "royal road" to the unconscious. The Bible may serve as the pastor's "royal road" to deeper levels of the personalities and motive patterns of his people and to an understanding of the dynamic factors in their distresses. The richness of the Bible, the breadth of experiences represented, the wide diversity of interpretations possible, enable people to be selective in their perceptions and individualistic in their interpretations. Therefore, what is meaningful to the person may reflect more accurately who he is and what his life situation is like than it does about the Bible itself. The pastor has a dual concern in this regard: the accuracy of the exegetical material on the one hand and what is being revealed about the interpreter on the other. The pastor must decide, moment by moment, whether she will relate to the exegetical issue or the personal issue. It is apparent that to relate to the exegetical issue postpones and, perhaps, even seals off, self-exploration, conflict identification, insight, and conflict resolving processes.

The Bible, it is suggested, may be a "projective" device, a mirror into which a person projects perceptions of self and others, feelings, emotions, attitudes, which in turn are reflected back with accuracy. In James 1:22-24 we read:

Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he is like.

In terms of ego defenses, we are dealing with the concept of projection, or in Biblical language, scapegoating, a process whereby a thought, feeling, impulse is disowned and assigned to another. Matt. 7:3: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

What the Thematic Apperception Test, and other projective tests, is to the psychologist, the Bible as a book of pictorial illustrations is to the pastor. The T.A.T. is based upon the principle that the individual has specific needs that occur in response to the "press" of the environment, that perception and interpretation are shaped by needs.¹⁸

Draper, *et al.*¹⁹ have reported a remarkable study in which high rater agreement was found on sorting patients into psychiatric diagnostic categories using solely responses to questions concerning religious beliefs and interests such as favorite Bible story, favorite Bible passage, favorite Bible character. Rater agreement was as high as agreement using traditional psychiatric interviewing life history materials.

This emphasis on the diagnostic use of the Bible tempts one to see only the personality of the interpreter and, in the extreme, to see only illness in religious expressions. It would be well to ask, 'What truth is being expressed, however distorted, in the individual's expressions?' Perhaps in the distortion, truth is being expressed, truth not only about the illness of the person but the illness of the society and culture around him. Perhaps also we fail to hear the theological question in the midst of illness statements, to dismiss the person's statements as illness statements and not as statements of alienation and estrangement and sin as well. The use of Bible study in work with a person hospitalized for emotional difficulties and a discussion of questions such as these is to be found in an article by Parker, to which the reader is referred.²⁰

B. The Bible as Answers to Questions

The Bible through tradition and training is the pastor's major text. Its descriptions of life parallel the lives of those shepherded; its questions parallel those posed by people; it offers answers to those hassled by life's questions.

Not surprisingly, pastor and laity alike are apt to turn to the Bible to find identification with their life situations. There are words there with which to match their cries. The sufferer's cry for relief and the desire on the part of the pastor to provide that relief lead them frequently to search, sometimes in proof-text fashion, for scriptural verses which will bring them out of their distress. Like a physician prescribing specific drugs for specific illness, the pastor is tempted to offer specific scriptural verses for specific life questions: a verse for fear, anxiety, guilt, hate, inadequacy, despair. Such prescriptions, to be sure, are sincere efforts to draw upon the Bible for wisdom and understanding, for care and compassion, for comfort and support, for acceptance and forgiveness, for affection and love, for courage and strength, for that which would be Good News for this person at this moment. But answers to personal problems are not arrived at through prescriptions but through work—the identification, the experiencing, the

expression, the working through of feelings and emotions in a relationship with a person, not merely with words.

G. The Bible and Counseling Processes

Pastoral counseling consists of at least three distinct forms of counseling models, methods, and objectives: Crisis Counseling, Pastoral Counseling, and Pastoral Psychotherapy. Each form has its distinctive process and structure and ways of interviewing to facilitate the unfolding of that process. That process and its structure is in turn a response to those processes and structures which represent problems in living. Let us consider some of these and their implications for the use of the Bible in such situations.

All pastors are involved, continually, in Crisis Counseling. Switzer²¹ provides a model for crisis intervention. Basically Crisis Counseling situations have in common acute anxiety in the face of situational or environmental stress and a sense of helplessness and dependency. Such people need a "good parent" from whom they can receive comfort, affection, protection, guidance, support, and limits (particularly when dangerous to themselves or others). They need the opportunity to ventilate, to express their intense feelings in an emotional catharsis. They probably need some support for their defenses; the acute phase is not the time to challenge, confront, or attack their defenses. They need a more objective view of the problem, a broader view, a view in perspective. They may need some assistance in changing the environmental or life situation which is causing or contributing to the acute distress. They need some immediate plan of action, some next step to take.

Both personality theory and the Bible may be considered generally as maps to read the terrain of experiencing, to serve both as identification points and as directions in which to move. They help to form and shape the pastor's responses to facilitate the flow of the process. Crisis Counseling, following Erich Berne's Parent-Adult-Child system²² consists in lowering the fear and guilt and anger of the Child in the presence of the pastor's nurturing Parent, and by mobilizing and encouraging the Adult to face reality and take action. The scripturally knowledgeable pastor will be in touch with those responses, whether structured in Biblical or personal language, which enable the parishioner to be at times as a little child, to return to the father at other times, and to put away childish things at still other times.

The direct use of the Bible by the pastor is more likely to occur in Crisis Counseling than in either Pastoral Counseling or in

Pastoral Psychotherapy, since such situations call for immediate support, quick identification and release of intense feelings and emotions, increased perspective, and a plan of action.

Other common crisis situations have their own similar yet distinctive processes, structures and defined forms of intervention. Lindemann²³ has outlined the grief process and defined grief work. Clinebell provides this analysis for the alcoholic,²⁴ for the alcoholic's mate and family,²⁵ and for the mentally ill.²⁶ Beavers presents a model for crisis intervention in marriage and family conflict,²⁷ and Hunt elaborates upon a model for the crisis of divorce.²⁸ Oates also has helpful material on the process of marital conflict.²⁹

Pastoral Counseling, in contrast to Depth Counseling or Pastoral Psychotherapy, is likely to be short-term, although a supportive, sustaining relationship may extend over a considerable period of time, but it is not likely to be an intense relationship, with conversations occurring no more frequently than weekly and usually less frequently. Pastoral counseling focuses on conscious rather than unconscious material, on reality experiences rather than on transference experiences, on present rather than historical relationships, on letting the counsellee "set the pace" rather than be pressed by the counselor to move into anxiety arousing material, on the person's strengths rather than upon his weaknesses, on effective coping behavior rather than upon self-defeating behavior, on growth issues rather than upon pathological conditions, on enhancement and enrichment rather than on destructive and crippling intrapsychic factors, on emotional problems realistically and appropriately related to life circumstances rather than upon unconscious and distorted emotions. Again, the pastor's understanding of the scriptures and of the processes of life events and of counseling relationships enriches both his maps of the terrain people travel with their emotional experiencing, their search for meaning, and the selection of facilitating and growth promoting interventions.

Pastoral Psychotherapy is also a process with discernible stages: the contract or covenant, the terms of the working relationship between therapist and client; the alliance or collegueship; transference and countertransference and other forms of resistance including acting in and acting out; therapeutic interventions of clarification, confrontation, interpretation, and working through; and termination. Pastoral psychotherapy is not likely to begin until the person acknowledges that he brings his concerns about himself, his pain, to the relationship, that his problems lie in the

realm of feelings, emotions, attitudes, not in the realm of the intellect or ideas and rational beliefs, that he is in conflict, not just with others but more basically within himself. Therefore, the Bible is not likely to be referred to initially. Bible references, when used judiciously and sparingly by the therapist, are intended to facilitate and intensify the therapeutic process. Covenant, for example, implies more importance and a more personal, mutual agreement than the term contract. Resistance might be identified and brought into sharper focus by recalling a Biblical passage such as that concerning the two sons who were asked to work in the vineyard, with the second son saying, "I go, sir," and going not (Matt. 21:30); or that of Jonah who was asked to go in one direction, to Nineveh, and went, instead, in the opposite direction to Tarshish. Biblical terms for the process of projection may have more impact: scapegoating, or "all have sinned," or a statement such as "Perhaps you feel yourself worthy of casting the first stone." The essence of growth is the necessity and willingness to give up something in order to attain something higher. But people remain fixated or regress. There is the Biblical challenge to "... lose one's life . . . in order to find it," to leave mother and father and cleave to one's mate, to think, speak, and act like a child but then to put away childish things. Some resist moving into their feelings and need to be reminded that it is as we mourn that we are comforted (Matt. 5:4). Frozen emotions, whether of love and sexuality or anger and resentment, are conflicted emotions (Matt. 5:24). The gift of intimacy and love cannot be given until anger and resentment are worked through. Furthermore, unexpressed and unresolved conflicted feelings leave one vulnerable (Matt. 5:25).

Unfortunately, there are verses which may be used in the service of repression. "That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. 5:22). However, the emphasis on "without a cause" may free up anger, since the therapist supports the belief that there is "cause" for a person's anger. Furthermore, he represents the distinction made between thought and deed, between hate and lust which may, indeed, hurt the person, and between the expressions of hate and lust which hurt another, while taking seriously the realization that the thought may be the parent of the deed.

Before leaving this section we might also point out the parallel between the client's testing the limits to see if he can gain control over the therapy relationship, to see if he can obtain tacit approval for acting out behavior, to see if he can force the therapist to

rescue him, and the temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness as he sought to identify who he was and how he would relate to the needs of people.

D. The Bible and Counseling Themes

A fourth major way of relating the Bible to pastoral counseling is thematic. While psychiatric cases dramatize the relationship between the dynamics of patient problems and the use they make of Biblical material, this relationship exists, in more subtle and less obvious form in less intensely conflicted people. One need not limit themes to those defined psychiatrically; the Bible as a comprehensive portrayal of life, with its rich and varied dramas, embraces in one form or another all of existence. Sometimes these dramas are acutely and intensely played, as in crisis situations; sometimes these dramas represent the complex, conflicted, hidden, buried neurotic core of parent-child interactions. Sometimes these dramas represent on-going existential concerns of meaning, value, purpose, the anxieties of our existence, structures which cannot be healed—rather they are the objects of salvation. Sometimes these dramas involve the celebrative moments in the life cycle. Truly, the Bible is the Book of Life. But can and will it read?

And the vision of all is become to you as the words of a book that is sealed which men give to one that is learned, saying, 'Read this, I pray thee,' and he sayeth, 'I cannot, for it is sealed.' And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, 'Read this, I pray thee,' and he saith, 'I cannot for I am not learned.' (Isa. 29:11-12)

What are some of these themes? Surely a major theme has to do with the drama between the forces of good and evil, of light and darkness, of life and death, of health and illness, of growth and stagnation, of progression and regression, of the courageous, painful step forward and the retreat in fright. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good and death and evil . . . therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed" (Deut. 30:15, 19). The battle is an internal one and may be externalized, occurring in psychotherapy as resistance and, in an intense form, as the negative transference. As Freud indicated,³⁰

The resistance accompanies the treatment step by step. Every single association, every act of the person under treatment must reckon with the resistance and represents a compromise between the forces that are striving towards recovery and the opposing ones.

The myth of Adam and Eve has its several themes including the problem of authority. In Adam and Eve we find the first act of disobedience, the prototype of the rebellion against authority,

and disobedience morality, with its accompanying guilt and punishment. The myth also presents the first human act in self-awareness and accompanying freedom to be used responsibly or irresponsibly. Furthermore, the question arises, 'How little or how much authority does the person claim?' or 'What is this person's source of authority?' Or 'Given his authority, how does he relate to others, forcing his will on others or living as a servant to all?'

Sibling rivalry and Oedipal problems are reflected in such stories as that of Joseph and his family and that of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah.

Hate is another powerful theme both in the Bible and in Pastoral Counseling. A patient, a mother, entered her daughter's bedroom with a pair of scissors with the intent of killing her daughter. For her, the story of Abraham's offering of his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice gave her the opportunity to discharge her aggression toward her daughter under the guise of a sacrifice to God. The child had been conceived before she was married, and her father had condemned and had never forgiven her. She, in turn, turned her hatred toward her daughter, whom she blamed for the alienation between her and her father, a hatred which was intensified by her husband, who centered his affection on their child. The two-fold task in therapy involved helping her identify who her god was—in this case the father, for whom she was about to sacrifice her child as a peace offering to placate his anger—and by helping her take responsibility for her resentment toward her child and see the misplaced nature of this anger.³¹

The tyranny of expectations becomes another major theme. Meeting every expectation is a form of enslavement. Pleasing another, that is, being good, or in religious terms pious, can become a crushing and suffocating burden. The Pharisees, scrupulous in their observance of God's commandments, were referred to by Jesus as "whited sepulchres" (Matt. 23:27). Believing that they had chosen life, they imposed upon themselves binding conformity to laws so detailed as to stifle life. Paul, a Pharisee liberated by Jesus Christ, realized that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:6). Neurotics, weighed down by the burden of the very efforts they make to live, despair over meeting the endless demands made upon them.

The themes of Bible and pastoral counseling are as endless as life, and as inexhaustible. The person who has difficulty setting limits and accepting limits might well struggle with his concept of God; the tendency to go it alone, to be aggressively independent,

might be related to Jesus' claim that we are part of a larger family; the tendency to intellectualize, to relate with words, to give definitions rather than feelings, might be related to ". . . the word became flesh and dwelt among us"; the struggle to remain fixed, static, predictable might be related to the answer given to Moses when he asked the name of God and was told, "I am becoming what I am becoming."

VII. Concluding Statement

Pastoral care and counseling, and ministry more generally, are a living out of a faith assertion, namely, that vital, sustaining, renewing, healing relationships are available and, claiming the title of minister, an offering of these relationships in the name of Christ. To offer such relationships the minister as pastoral counselor has at least two major responsibilities to meet:

(1) That of knowing the Biblical, theological, and psychological concepts, theories, perspectives, concerning both the common and the unique, the routine and the critical life dramas which characterize human experiences. The pastoral counselor must know the content, the structures, the processes of significant life events as these are defined through the best that the theological and psychological disciplines have to offer.

(2) That of being able to participate and share in all of life's experiences as these are met, as they unfold and flow along within and among people. Effectiveness in meeting these two responsibilities defines the minister's competency as a pastoral counselor. From the perspective of the Bible this means that the pastoral counselor must be able to translate the Bible out of the realm of the authoritarian and the symbolic into the realm of interpreted meaningfulness, the realm of personal and interpersonal realities, where its meanings touch life, speak for life, and speak to life. From the perspective of counseling theory and practice, it means being able to structure relationships so that personal and interpersonal feelings may be touched, expressed, and explored, their conflicts identified and resolution sought. The relationship between symbols of Bible, of Creed, of personality theory on the one hand, and experience on the other may be mutually supportive and mutually revelatory: experience cries out for symbols with which to speak, with which to have meaning, with which to share, and symbols seek experiences to represent, to re-vitalize, to empower. In that effort to relate meaning and experience, people find the salvation of release, restoration, and fulfillment.

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Theological Reflections on the Reformation and the Status of Women

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The role of women in the Reformation has become an increasingly popular subject for research during the last decade. Historians have always been fascinated with the role of political figures such as Elizabeth I or her sister, Mary Tudor, in the formation of the character and institutions of Protestant Christianity in England. Catherine de Medici and Marguerite d'Angoulême in France, while less well known than their English counterparts, have nevertheless received considerable attention in scholarly journals and books. The poetry of Vittoria Colonna in Italy, the mystical writings of St. Teresa of Avila in Spain, and the polemical tracts of Katherine Zell in Alsace made individually and together an important impact on the development of popular religious beliefs in Europe in the 16th century. Even the women who are remembered primarily for the men whom they married have left their own impress on the history of the Reformation era, from Katherina von Bora, whose tightfisted management of the financial affairs of the Luther household has become legendary, to the quiet Wibrandis Rosenblatt, who had the unusual distinction of marrying in succession three of the most important reformers: Johannes Oecolampadius, Wolfgang Capito, and Martin Bucer.

Women made a significant contribution to the spread and establishment of the Protestant Reformation, even if they did not (with very few exceptions) write commentaries on Scripture, occupy important European pulpits, or compose technical essays in theology. But the reverse proposition is also true: the Reformation, both in its ideology and in combination with other social forces, effected a change in the status of European women. The implications of what took place then are worth considering as we ponder the respective roles of men and women in Church and society today.

I

The Council of Florence in 1439 declared officially that marriage was a sacrament and that it bestowed a triple good. (1) The procreation of children, by which was meant not simply the biological act of reproduction but also the nurture and education of children for a productive role in society. This control of sexual drives within structures which took responsibility for the personal and biological effects of sexual intercourse provided, to use the quaint but painfully accurate phrase, "a remedy for concupiscence." (2) Mutual society, which was generally interpreted to mean a perpetual monogamous covenant between a man and a woman, one which emphasized fidelity and trust over the fluctuations of feeling and passion. (3) Indissolubility. As Christ loved the Church with a commitment which never fails, so men and women were to love each other and to rear their children in the love and fear of God. Such love implies mutual sacrifice and devotion and excludes from the outset all possibility of divorce. Only if Christ can be separated from the Church can the marriage bond between husband and wife be dissolved.

While the late medieval Church exalted the institution of marriage in language which can scarcely be surpassed, it also praised virginity as a higher moral state and required its clergy to be celibate. Though some late medieval figures, such as Nicholas de Blony, taught that marriage was as meritorious as celibacy, the majority of late medieval clergy agreed with the opinion of the famous Strassburg preacher, John Geiler of Kaysersberg, who observed that marriage is honorable but not preferable to the state of celibacy.

There were, after all, in the Bible plenty of sayings which lent support to the development of a celibate ethic. Paul had indicated that celibacy was preferable to marriage, not because of a general world-weariness, but because the celibate minister was delivered from family cares and responsibilities and was therefore free to be devoted completely to the work of the gospel. Jesus had praised those disciples who became eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven, even though it is impossible to regard Jesus as an ascetic in the ordinary sense of the term. And after the triumph of Christianity in Europe celibacy was one of the few forms of martyrdom still accessible to the grandchildren of Cyprian and Perpetua.

The celibate ethic was reinforced by a distinction between commands and counsels. Commands are ethical requirements binding

on all Christians, such as the prohibition of murder or adultery. Counsels, on the other hand, are moral requirements binding on an élite within the Church who have obligated themselves by a vow to a more rigorous standard of Christian discipleship. Among the counsels are the sayings of Jesus on non-retaliation, the renunciation of private property, and the desirability of a celibate life. Ever since canon 33 of the Council of Elvira (ca. 300) clerical celibacy had been enjoined in the West. The laity, however, were only required to keep the commandments concerning adultery and fornication.

The celibate ethic received important encouragement from the writings and example of St. Augustine, who could find for himself no middle ground between asceticism and sexual license. Augustine did not teach that original sin was transmitted from generation to generation by the sexual act itself (that would be Manichean), but by the inordinate self-regard of the sexual partners who think of themselves more highly than they ought to think and who will their own good rather than the good of their spouses. Biology was not the culprit, though original sin was connected with human sexual activity in the broader sense. While the celibate Christian did not participate in the admitted goods of marriage, the celibate was also free of responsibility for its unfortunate side-effects.

The emphasis on celibacy as the preferred state for the serious Christian and the obligation of the clergy to remain celibate created a permanent class of men not fully integrated into society. Because the clergy had no wives and families of their own, they were regarded by the suspicious laity (and not always unjustly) as a perpetual threat to the stability of the home. Instances of anti-clerical sentiment in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, especially anti-clerical sentiment relating to the alleged sexual offenses of some of the clergy, are all too easy to find in the sources.

In 1519 a group of canons in Strassburg, returning from a drunken party, were attacked by a group of citizens who regarded them as a danger to the moral purity of their wives and daughters. John Murner, brother of the rabidly anti-feminist Franciscan friar, Thomas Murner, accused the canons of Young St. Peter's Church in Strassburg of seducing his sister. In January of 1520 two women charged three members of the clergy, including the vicar of the Strassburg cathedral, with breaking into their homes at midnight and making improper sexual advances. When the women resisted, they were beaten. Needless to say, the guilty clergy were fined and imprisoned by the Strassburg city council.

Even the confessional was regarded with suspicion by the laity. The Eisenach preacher, Jacob Strauss, attacked the confessional practice of the late medieval clergy as profoundly unsettling to the peace and stability of Christian family life:

In the confessional simple folk learn things about sin and evil which have never occurred to them before, and which need not ever have occurred to them! The confessional is a schooling in sin. It is known and many thousand can attest how often mischievous and perverse monks out of their shameless hearts have so thoroughly and persistently questioned young girls and boys, innocent children, and simple wives about the sins of the flesh in their cursed confessional corners that more harm was done there to Christian chasteness and purity than in any whorehouse in the world. He is considered a good father confessor who can probe into every secret recess of the heart and instill into the innocent penitent every sin his flesh has not yet experienced. They want to know from virtuous wives all the circumstances of the marital duty—how their husbands do it [certain “unnatural” positions were very serious sins], how often, how much pleasure it brings, when it is done, and the like. In this way new desires and lusts are stimulated within the weak. They even teach poor wives not to submit to their husbands on certain holidays and during Lent.¹

If clergy were regarded by the laity as a threat to the stability of the home, women were regarded by clergy as a threat to their celibacy and moral purity. Sebastian Brant, himself a layman, gave expression to this sentiment when he wrote his masterpiece, *The Ship of Fools* (1494):

Who sees too much of women's charms
His morals and his conscience harms;
He cannot worship God aright
Who finds in women great delight.²

In a time of moral decline and disintegration (and Brant like Geiler of Kaysersberg was convinced he lived in such a time of moral decay), the “frailty” of women constitutes a perpetual temptation for a celibate clergy, whose vows require them to abstain from sexual activity, but whose vocation brings them in constant contact with the wives and daughters of laymen. Not all clergy were able to resist the temptations strewn in their path. Friar Martin Luther, O.E.S.A., had no difficulty keeping his celibate vows; Father Huldrych Zwingli and Friar Martin Bucer, O.P., were not so morally heroic.

Many clergy took concubines, a practice winked at by some ecclesiastical superiors and even taxed by a few bishops as a way of raising additional revenues for the diocese. The Protestant reformer, Heinrich Bullinger, was born into such a clerical “family.” But clergy who took concubines rather than place themselves in

the path of a temptation which they did not trust themselves to resist placed themselves in another kind of moral dilemma. The relationship between a priest and his housekeeper, however regularized and accepted, was still in the eyes of the Church fornication. Men and women who lived in this relationship had to do so in the knowledge that they were committing mortal sin and in danger of punishment by God. Furthermore, when a priest died, his widow was left without inheritance and his children without a name. As far as civil and canon law were concerned, the pastor's wife—no matter how faithful she had been to him—was only the priest's whore. She had no claims against the estate which she could prosecute and no position in society which she could occupy.

II

The Protestant Reformation constituted a sustained attack on the celibate ethic and a re-emphasis on the dignity of the institution of marriage. Protestants did not deny that some men and women are called to a celibate life, though they regarded all claims to a celibate vocation with considerable suspicion, but they rejected the contention that celibacy should be made a law binding on all clergy. A vow in the very nature of the case destroys Christian freedom. While some Christians may be called to celibacy, all Christians are assuredly called to a life of freedom. Therefore celibacy which is received as a gift and is exercised in freedom may be celebrated as an authentic form of Christian discipleship. Celibacy which is made a law and enforced by a binding vow destroys the freedom which belongs to the essence of the Christian life and must therefore be rejected. Celibacy may be a charism; it may never be a law.

The distinction between commands and counsels was also rejected by Protestants, though not by all Protestants in exactly the same way. The Anabaptists, for example, concluded that non-resistance and pacifism were binding on all Christians, who were excluded by the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount from all participation in public and political life. Luther, on the other hand, distinguished between what a Christian was permitted to do in all matters which touched his own case exclusively (here the rigorous precepts of Jesus apply directly) and what he was obliged to do for the sake of his neighbor who would be left at the mercy of sinful and rapacious men if he refused in such cases to resist evil forcibly. Christian love and responsibility even permit one to discharge the role of public executioner, though Christ for-

bids one to take revenge or to seek justice in a purely personal matter. But whether one followed Luther or the Anabaptists or any of the shades of Protestant opinion in between, all Protestants agreed that the distinction between commands and counsels was unacceptable in principle. The gifts and demands of the gospel are equally relevant for all Christians, clerical and lay. There is no heroic *élite* in the Church; or, perhaps one should say, all Christians are called to join that heroic *élite*. There is one standard of sanctity for all Christians.

No reason could be found by the Protestants for urging celibacy on their clergy. The pastor (only men were ordained in the 16th century) is not ontologically distinct from the laity. He has received no indelible character which communicates to him a sacramental power denied to the laity. The ministry of Word and sacrament belongs inherently to the common priesthood conferred on all Christians, male and female, in their baptism. Lay Christians exercise that ministry in private as they carry God's Word of judgment and grace to their neighbor. The pastor is ordained to preach that Word in public and preside at the Church's celebration of baptism and the eucharist. The distinction between clergy and layperson is primarily functional within the body of Christ, though no one may exercise that function who has not been called to do so by God (*rite vocatus*) and acknowledged and confirmed in that office by some local congregation of believers. There is no reason, therefore, why the pastor—who differs from the laity only in function and vocation—should not marry and rear his own family. Indeed, the exercise of his vocation is helped rather than hindered by his family life and participation in ordinary social responsibilities.

Together with the rejection of celibacy as a law, the dissolution of the distinction between commands and counsels, and the stress on the functional character of the pastor's office (presupposing always the *rite vocatus*), Protestants emphasized the interdependence of men and women in a joint task of creating a Christian society. Marriage stands at the center of a God-given order. Matthew Zell, a Protestant preacher at the cathedral in Strassburg, argued in a famous sermon that, since woman was made from man, this proves not that women are subordinate to men but that man can only attain his full perfection in marriage. Mutual society lies at the heart of the Christian gospel. As Christ loved the Church, so men and women are to love each other and to seek their perfection in an interdependent relationship.

Just as marriage is the ordinary and proper state of life for the Protestant pastor, so, too, are women called to a more active role in the life and public ministry of the Church. Protestants did not advocate the ordination of women, though the stress on the common priesthood conferred in baptism and the redefinition of ordination in functional terms laid the foundation for the ordination of women in another place and time. Almost all of the arguments used today to defend the practice of the ordination of women were known in the 16th century, though none of the people who used them advocated such a radical break with the long-standing practice of the Christian churches. Nevertheless, the arguments were advanced, if only to support a more active role for women among the laity of the Church. When Katherine Zell, for example, was told by a critic that St. Paul commanded women to be silent in the Church, she responded that the same apostle had also taught that in Christ there is neither male nor female, bond nor free. Furthermore, the prophet Joel predicted that in the last days daughters as well as sons would prophesy. And no one who reads Luke's gospel can fail to be impressed by the fact that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit while her husband, Zechariah, was struck dumb because of his unbelief. Women have a priesthood to discharge as well as men; like men they are to be Christ to the neighbor.

This Protestant teaching led to the initiation of certain social changes and sanctioned others, though one should be careful never to confuse the intention to effect a change with the change itself. One can, however, safely observe that the celibate ethic was utterly destroyed for Protestants, who nevertheless preserved the notion of an occasional charism of celibacy (which was forced to prove its credentials before a largely skeptical audience). Protestants turned the full force of their attention to the institution of marriage and emphasized the interdependence of men and women within it. Women were no longer regarded as simply dependent on their husbands, but were expected to assume an active role in their relationship to them. Martin Bucer once observed that the only defect of his second wife was that she did not criticize him. Mutual criticism is an expression of mutual love. Christians are called to seek their perfection in society rather than in isolation.

Protestant clergy, who were expected to marry (save in very rare and exceptional cases), were integrated more fully into society. The home and not the cloister became the arena for the exercise of the gentler Christian virtues. Marriage was not a concession to human

weakness, but the chosen institution for the expression of the interdependence of male and female described in Genesis one and two. Not only the sexual act but the mutual society of male and female antedates the fall as the God-given purpose of marriage. "It is not good for man to be alone," was not spoken of human nature in a state of sin, but of man as male and female before the fall. Thus procreation and mutual society take precedence over the "remedy for concupiscence" as the principal purposes of marriage.

By rejecting the celibate ethic and emphasizing the institution of marriage as a means for the hallowing of human life, the Reformation created almost incidentally the office of pastor's wife. Women who had lived a shadowy existence as a priest's concubine were able to enter into a sexual relationship with their husbands within officially acknowledged bonds of matrimony. This was a gain not simply in the sense of delivering these women from an intolerable burden of guilt (which there was on Protestant grounds no conceivable reason for them to carry), but also in the sense of recognizing and honoring their inheritance rights as widows and the legitimacy of their children. It may be difficult for women who are currently seeking ordination to regard the creation of the pastor's wife as a great step forward in the liberation of women from unjust repression, but for the women involved the Reformation was a profoundly liberating event.

Women were not ordained as a result of the Protestant Reformation, or, perhaps one should say, not as an *immediate* result of the Reformation, but laywomen were given a far greater role in the lives of the Protestant churches than they had ever exercised in the medieval Church, even as members of religious orders. At the very end of her life Katherine Zell described her role as a pastor's wife in Strassburg. While Katherine had no children and was able to assume far more duties in Church and community than the average laywoman, nevertheless she only claimed in practice a freedom accessible to all women in principle:

That I learned to understand and helped to acknowledge the Gospel I shall let God declare. That I married my pious husband and for this endured slander and lies, God knows. The work which I carried on both in the house and out is known both by those who already rest in God and those who are still living—how I helped to establish the Gospel, took in the exiled, comforted the homeless refugees, furthered the Church, preaching and the schools, God will remember even if the world may forget or did not notice . . . I honored, cherished and sheltered many great, learned men, with care, work and expense . . . I listened to their conversation and their preaching, I read their books and their letters and they were glad to

receive mine . . . and I must express how fond I was of all the old, great learned men and founders of the Church of Christ, how much I enjoyed listening to their talk of holy things and how my heart was joyful in these things.³

III

What may be concluded from this brief sketch as important for the Church in the present to consider? Let me note only some things which seem to me important:

1. The Protestant churches were correct to accept celibacy as a gift and to reject it as a law. Celibacy is an authentic form of Christian discipleship, and the freedom of the gospel means at the very least that some Christians will, for whatever reasons, be led to adopt this style of life. The Protestant churches are in error, therefore, when they identify celibacy with homosexuality and make marriage a law. A Church which respects the freedom of the gospel may not require its clergy to be celibate; by the same token a Church which respects that same freedom dare not require its clergy to be married. Against such legalism stand the words of Jesus, the teaching of Luther, and the example of Paul and Asbury.

2. The Protestant emphasis on the interdependence of men and women in marriage and the common calling of men and women to seek the will of God in mutual relationship is an important corrective to theologies which subordinate women to men, on the one hand,⁴ or which dispense with the relationship between male and female as trivial, on the other. Men and women are created for each other; they are bound to each other by ties of mutual dependence within the institution of marriage and outside it. The *imago dei* is an *imago trinitatis* in the sense that the society of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is reflected in the society of man who is created male and female. Mutual dependence involves for most Christians the task of living a faithful covenant in sexual partnership. For Christians who choose celibacy it involves caring and sacrificial relationships with men and women in the full range of our common life together.

The plain fact is that Christian men and women need each other in order to be as much as possible the Church of Jesus Christ in our time and place, and to obey as fully as possible the will of God in our personal and corporate relationships. There is no room in the Church for misanthropy or misogyny. God who created us male and female calls us to perfection in mutual society. Christians who seek perfection in the exclusive society of one sex will

not find it. Therefore while celibacy (which sublimates the sexual relationship between male and female) may be an authentic form of Christian discipleship, homosexuality (which denies that relationship) never is.

3. The Reformation did not sanction the ordination of women to the public ministry of Word and sacrament. Nevertheless, the fundamental arguments which sanction that act are already articulated in the Reformation era. Women share in the common priesthood committed to all the faithful by baptism. When women are ordained, they are only authorized to exercise in public a charism granted to them for private exercise by virtue of their incorporation into Christ. Women may be forbidden to preach and celebrate the eucharist only if it may be demonstrated from Scripture that in Christ there is indeed male and female (contra Paul) and that in the last days sons shall prophesy while daughters shall demurely keep silent (contra Peter). Women already belong to a royal priesthood; otherwise they are not even members of the Church.

4. That a Christian is a female is no bar to valid ordination in the Church. But neither is it the basis on which ordination may be granted. Those persons—and *only* they—whether male or female, bond or free, may be ordained for the public ministry of Word and sacrament who have been called to the ministry by God (*rite vocatus*) and who have demonstrated to the Church that they have—in the happy Wesleyan phrase—"gifts, grace and the promise of usefulness." The office may be discharged by any baptized Christian, male or female; its discharge should be restricted, however, to those Christians who have been called to that ministry and whose vocation has been acknowledged by the Church. It is a scandal that women, who are rightly called to that office, are barred from it, while men, who are not, are admitted. Calling and not sex is the test of authentic ministry; the Church is called to prove the spirits, not determine the gender. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the arguments against the ordination of women, especially when they are combined with a laxity of standards with respect to the ordination of men, are only mere sophistry.

Footnotes

1. Jacob Strauss, *Ein neüw wunderbarlich Beychtbeüchlin* (Augsburg, 1523) as quoted by Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 52-53.

2. Sebastian Brant, *The Ship of Fools*, trans. by E. H. Zeydel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p. 91.

3. Katherine Zell, *Ein Brief an die ganze Burgerschaft der Stadt Strassburg betreffend Hern Ludwig Rabus* (1557) as quoted by Miriam U. Chrisman, "Women and the Reformation in Strasbourg 1490-1530," *ARG* 63 (1972), p. 157.

4. I do not mean to imply that traditional Protestant theology did not teach the subordination of women to men within the context of family and the home; it certainly did. But the emphases on spiritual equality in Christ, a common priesthood, companionship, and the rejection of celibacy are far more important motifs with historical consequences even within the 16th century itself. In his commentary on Genesis Calvin observed that the male was only half a man and Adam saw himself complete in his wife. That is frequently overlooked in the rush to condemn the Protestant teaching of the obedience of women to men. I cannot agree with the judgment of George Tavard that Protestantism has contributed little original insight to a theology of womanhood (cf. George H. Tavard, *Women in Christian Tradition*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973, p. 171). It is Protestantism, and not Eastern Orthodoxy or the Roman Catholic Church, which has found a rationale for the ordination of women, not by rejecting its tradition, but by taking the implications of its tradition seriously.

Focus On Faculty

WILLIAM H. WILLIMON, Assistant Professor of Liturgy and Worship:

In my seminary years during the frenetic sixties, I knew a liberated couple who were attempting to raise their little boy free of parental restrictions and social conventions. Their child roamed freely in the wildest excesses of misinterpreted Spock.

The child's mother proudly told us that they were never going to "train" their child to say such shop-worn clichés as "thank you" or "please." Their child would develop in "freedom," free to express thanks "naturally" and "spontaneously."

You can imagine how the child developed. Their "free spirit" was regarded by most people as an undisciplined, insufferable, selfish brat, the terror of the kindergarten and the beast of the neighborhood. Never did I hear him utter one "thank you" or "please" in the time I observed him (observing him at a distance, of course). He never expressed words of thanks because he was never taught to do so.

In a way, I think this story relates to a typical Protestant misconception that I will probably be trying to overcome here at Duke Divinity School. For many of us, "ritual" is a dirty word, evoking specters of Popish rites of humdrum, mindless formalism. But the expression of little words like "thanks" and "please" are rituals. They are learned, patterned, expressions of inner feelings. During the course of an average day I participate in the ritual of thanking other people dozens of times. Sometimes I do it in a casual, offhand manner without deep commitment or thought, as when I thank the postman for my mail. Sometimes I do it with feelings of great gratitude, as when a student makes a remark in class that helps me see something in a new and meaningful way.

While I admit that all of my daily "thank you's" may not be deeply felt, I am glad that I know how to say "thanks" when I need to be thankful.

While we are justified in criticizing the shallow rituals that often clutter our worship, let us remember that ritual is important and unavoidable. Ritual helps us get by. When someone comes to our house to visit, my little toddler runs and hides in his room or dances around wildly. He is uncomfortable and unsure because

he has not yet learned the ritual of meeting people. His actions remind me of many churches that I know whose worship rituals are often little more than the unplanned, interminable chatter of the preacher or a mix of unrelated congregational words and actions. These congregations have forgotten (or have never learned) our rituals for meeting God. Their worship is cluttered with poor rituals which neither say nor do what the congregation intends to say and do. Many of our rituals in worship are better ways of avoiding God than meeting God.

Religious rituals should tell us what to do when we want to praise, pray, confess, sing and wouldn't know how unless we had been taught. Christian worship includes all those gestures, movements, words, objects, and postures which comprise the rituals of our relating ourselves to God. The question for us in the Church is not, "Shall we have ritual or not?" The question is, "Will our religious rituals be adequate for forming and expressing our faith?"

I believe that the disciplined study of worship and liturgy within the seminary should lead future worship leaders to reflect critically upon our religious rituals. Worship of the past should be reconstructed and compared to our present worship; we need to know what we have lost or gained over the years. The varieties of worship experiences, such as the worship of the Black Church and the perspective of women, need to be studied; we need to know how our tradition can be enriched and how our needs and aspirations can be more fully expressed. Attempts at worship innovation must be evaluated; we need to know what makes worship "contemporary." We need to see that there is as much "ritual" in a Billy Graham Crusade as in a Roman High Mass, and we need to see the inadequacy (and downright idolatry) of many of our rituals. Finally, we need training in the practical "how to" aspects of worship leadership.

These are some of the things I hope to lead students and faculty in doing with worship and liturgy at the Divinity School.

It is an exciting time to be teaching, doing, and thinking about worship. Vatican II opened the door for exciting Roman Catholic innovation. We Protestants are rediscovering our worship heritage and the centrality of worship for congregational life. We have moved through a period of worship antiquarianism in which we tried to duplicate anything that we thought was old and Gothic and historically respectable. We have emerged from a recent period of "experimental" worship in which banners and balloons were

thought to entice the holy into our midst. Now we are ready for serious, reflective, disciplined work on worship in the local church.

My own academic work includes studies at Wofford College, Yale Divinity School, and Candler School of Theology at Emory. My work at these schools gave me some tools for reflection and study on the subject of Christian worship. I am a strong believer that intense academic study is the best preparation for the practical and personal demands of the ministry.

But I must admit that I know more about worship ("know" in the more complete Biblical sense of the word) because of the churches where I have served as a pastor than because of the schools where I have been a student. An urbane, proper parish in New England (and what is more proper than New England?) convinced me that we white middle class types need to admit more feeling into our worship. An exasperating, difficult, lovable rural parish in Georgia (and what is more rural than rural Georgia?) taught me the beauty of simple, devout, heart-felt worship that breaks all rules of textbook liturgics. A large church in a little town in South Carolina taught me the joy of "liturgical" worship in a thoroughly Protestant setting. And a free wheeling little parish in a seaside resort taught me that our modern world is not as secular as some have claimed and that most people are just as hungry to meet God and their fellow Christians in worship as they have ever been. I here acknowledge my debt to these congregations who led me to worship while I thought I was leading them.

It might interest you to know that my wife's father (a Duke Divinity School alumnus) and step-grandmother (a Duke Course of Study graduate) are active United Methodist ministers in South Carolina. My wife's grandfather was a United Methodist minister too. I have thus inherited a great deal of clerical advice (and some Duke theology) through marriage.

In beginning to teach, and think, and talk about worship and in leading seminarians to do the same, I remember a remark John Calvin in his *Institutes* made about worship. Calvin had been discussing the Lord's Supper at great length. He ended by commenting on the difficulty of speaking about the Sacrament in mere words:

. . . I urge my readers not to confine their mental interest within these too narrow limits, but to strive much higher than I can lead them . . . to break forth in wonder at this mystery, which plainly neither the mind is able to conceive nor the tongue to express. (IV. VII, 7)

I want this: To reflect with my students and faculty colleagues in

a scholarly way on the mystery of worship and liturgy in our Church without destroying our sense of wonder.



B. MAURICE RITCHIE, B.D., 1963; Th.M., 1968; Director of Admissions and Student Affairs:

When Dean Langford invited me to my present ministry in university administration, I was a "visiting lecturer" in history and religion at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. My year on that state university campus had been, all things considered, a good one. I was most impressed by the commitment of my colleagues in history to the campus and the region. I enjoyed the built-in demands for reading towards lecture preparation and personal interchange with more serious students.

But my year at Western made me more aware of dimensions of my own life which were previously not so clear. I did not feel free to "own" my identity as an ordained minister in that secular setting—despite the fact that one of my more impudent students accused me of "droning on like a preacher" in my lectures. I also discovered that the academic quarter calendar and class size militated against the close personal relationship with students I had enjoyed as a student at Davidson College (1954-58), Duke Divinity School (1958-59; 1961-63; 1968-72) and as campus minister at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. My educational and professional experiences had whetted my appetite for more than I was experiencing in that setting.

Dean Langford's invitation to join the Divinity School staff particularly interested me because it enabled me to move closer to the visible church and my relationship to it as an ordained minister. It also held out the possibility of personal relationships with students over a three to four year period.

Since my campus ministry days I had considered university administration as an area of potential ministry. I had known administrators as a student and as a practicing campus minister and had been impressed both by their very negative and very positive models or styles of administration. It was and still is my hope to run an efficient office which minimizes hassles for students and faculty and maximizes growth opportunities for both groups. I see the administrative task as one which should reduce extraneous

claims on student and faculty time and serve to foster creative and growth-producing contacts between these two groups.

Questions and quandaries of colleagues in the annual conferences notwithstanding, I perceive and interpret my present function as Director of Admissions and Student Affairs as ministry in the fullest sense of the word. Here I have an opportunity to serve the church at a very important point in her ministry. I would hope to enrich her ministry *and* that of Duke Divinity School through my presence here. Were this task not reconcilable in the deepest sense with ordained ministry, I would have to search for another setting which was so reconcilable.

I have written as if Duke and the church were my entire life. As important and meaningful as they are, they are but the setting for a larger life with Dorothy Ann Poole, formerly of Statesville, North Carolina, and our two handfuls, Laura Evelyn, age 3, and Caroline Elizabeth, age 2. We enjoy living in the Duke Park section of Durham and hope to remain in the city so long as we are in Durham.

The Divinity School impressed me as a student, and I would not have returned as a staff person had I not enjoyed good experiences on the campus as a student. I must say in all candor that my three years on the staff have enhanced my esteem for my colleagues. They are not only capable and competent persons; they also have real commitments to the ministry of the church.

Book Reviews

RE-INTRODUCING WESLEY: THE OXFORD EDITION OF THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY

Volume 11. *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*. Edited by Gerald R. Cragg. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. 1975 (1976). 593 pages, including Appendix and Indexes. \$29.95.

"The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition" was the main theme for a Drew University Theological School-Graduate School Consultation, October 9-11, 1974, to celebrate publication of the first volume of the Oxford Edition of the Works of John Wesley. Distinguished Wesley scholars and churchmen of several countries and communions—Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Reformed, as well as Methodist—gathered for addresses by Albert C. Outler of Southern Methodist University, Gordon Rupp of Cambridge, Martin Schmidt of Heidelberg, Frank Baker of Duke, Father Michael Hurley of the Irish Ecumenical Institute, Bishop James K. Mathews of Washington, with learned commentary by Robert E. Cushman of Duke, Horton Davies of Princeton, Lawrence D. McIntosh of Drew, Colin Williams of Yale, and others. It was expected that this volume of Wesley's doctrinal affirmations and controversies would there be presented by the representative of Oxford University Press. The bad news was that it was still delayed in completion, and would be very costly; the good news was that we could see it then in page proof, and that it would be worth the waiting and the cost.

At last we have it, and while observing this year the fiftieth anniversary of Duke Divinity School and the bicentennial of Methodism in North Carolina, we may fittingly celebrate also the first-fruits of a concurrent half-century of scholarly devotion singularly in keeping with the indefatigable labors of Wesley two centuries earlier. It was just over fifty years ago, the year before Duke University opened the "School of Religion" in 1926, that an English Methodist boy named Frank Baker, a native of Hull, began collecting Wesleyana as a hobby. By 1960 his collection had grown to some 17,500 volumes, documents, and manuscripts. During those years he had become a Methodist minister and teacher, earned the Ph.D. at Nottingham University with a voluminous dissertation on John Wesley's protégé and intended successor, William Grimshaw, and served as Secretary of the Wesley Historical Society of England, member of the World Methodist Council, and Joint Secretary of the International Methodist Historical Society.

Accordingly when Dean Cushman of Duke Divinity School, Professor Outler and Dean Merrimon Cuningham of Perkins School of Theology, Professor Franz Hildebrandt of Drew Theological School, and other scholars were considering the need for a new critical edition of the works of John Wesley, they turned to Frank Baker as archivist and bibliographer, and sought his collection as basic material. In 1960 Dean Cushman took the lead in forming a Board of Directors, including also the Deans of Methodist theological schools at Drew, Emory, Southern Methodist, and later Boston University, to sponsor the "Wesley's Works Editorial Project." On November 5, 1961, the *Durham Morning Herald* carried a lengthy news release from Dean Cushman, University Librarian Benjamin E.

Powell, and Divinity School Librarian Donn Michael Farris, announcing acquisition by Duke University of "the largest collection of the writings of John and Charles Wesley which exists on the American continent and one of the most outstanding in the world . . . the Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana and British Methodism." "Duke now has acquired not only Dr. Baker's collection," continued the article, "but the man as well." Frank Baker had already joined our faculty.

Since that time he has labored prodigiously as bibliographer, as textual editor, eventually as editor-in-chief of the projected thirty-four volume series. Many other scholars have shared in this immense undertaking, as members of the boards of directors, general editors, unit editors, assistants in textual work, and specialists helping to identify sources and allusions, and their manifold achievements will become apparent in due course. But surely none but Frank Baker would and could so faithfully and competently, so exhaustively and meticulously, search out, read and re-read, document, decipher, collate, and master so many editions and variant details of every discoverable writing of the Wesleys!

During these fifteen years of bibliographical, textual, and editorial work he has taught regularly, traveled, lectured and preached widely, and published not only numerous scholarly articles but several major books, including *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley* (Epworth Press, 1962) and a revised edition, *Charles Wesley's Verse: An Introduction* (Epworth, 1964); *William Grimshaw: 1708-1763* (Epworth, 1963); *John Wesley and the Church of England* (Abingdon Press, 1970); and recently *From Wesley to Asbury: Studies in Early American Methodism* (Duke University Press, 1976). His principal life work, however, in past and years to come, is the Wesley's Works Editorial Project. He is directly responsible as unit editor for much that is to come: the seven volumes of *Letters* (Volumes 25-31) and the two volumes of *Bibliography of the Works of John and Charles Wesley* (Volumes 32-33). His groundwork for the *Bibliography* is already evident in *A Union Catalogue of the Publications of John and Charles Wesley* (230 pp.; Duke Divinity School, Duke University, 1966) and a brief (19-page) *Basic Bibliography of Methodist History: Writings of the Wesleys*. These are foundational to his enormous task of providing each unit editor with the definitive annotated text and explanatory appendix for each document and volume.

Why should Frank Baker and many others engage in an undertaking of such magnitude and duration to present the Wesley of the eighteenth century anew to the late twentieth? Not just because the material is "there" (if so laboriously sought), though that were justification enough in the groves of Academe. The teaching Church has more intrinsic and compelling reasons, for the sake of an ecumenical comprehension now more sensitive to Wesley's faith and a Methodism too generally uninstructed in its rich heritage and direction. It is not without significance that four decades of "theological rediscovery of John Wesley" have involved sympathetic scholars of various traditions who would identify Wesley's affinities with Calvinism, Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, Lutheranism, Moravianism and other Pietism, Puritanism, the Greek Fathers, the Caroline Divines, or recent Liberalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, Pentecostalism, or Fundamentalism. While some have erred in partisan discovery and interpretation, in the main they have together illuminated an integral centrality and depth of faith and doctrine capable of holding tensions in dynamic synthesis (as Albert Outler is fond of emphasizing). "John Wesley for Any Season" was the headline for the *British Methodist Recorder* report on the Drew Consultation: "John Wesley emerged from a consultation on his place in the Christian tradition . . . just as stubborn, imperious, self giving, and lovable as ever—perhaps the only really militant middle-of-the-roader in theological history."

If "middle-of-the-roader" is apt as reminder of his "catholic spirit" and willingness to "think and let think" as regards "opinions" (non-essentials), it should not be misconstrued to imply theological indeterminateness or indifference. *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, *A Farther Appeal*, and the several *Open Letters* comprising this present volume ring loud and clear with affirmation, interpretation, and defense of essential doctrines, which he summarizes at the beginning of the *Farther Appeal*: "I will briefly mention what those doctrines are before I consider the objections against them. Now all I teach respects either the nature and condition of *justification*, the nature and condition of *salvation*, the nature of justifying and saving *faith*, or the *Author* of faith and salvation" (p. 105). "Militant" may be the word for his ensuing vindications of doctrinal faithfulness, corrections of misinterpretations and slanders, resolute logical arguments, polemical counterattacks, and withal, evangelical appeals even to abusive opponents. Perhaps "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion" yet remains the term for Wesley's rational strategy of faith and love.

It was in his very firmness as to what mattered most—or rather, firm confidence in "the *Author* of faith and salvation"—that he could freely welcome the authentic witness of other individuals and communions for unity in fellowship and mission, and could discriminatingly appropriate and hold in productive tension much from the widely diverse theological heritage of the centuries. Wesley's theology—the faith of the *Appeals*—was steeped in Word in Scripture, informed and interpreted by doctrinal and ecclesiastical tradition, spiritually authenticated in personal experience, tested and expressed by reason, intuitive and discursive, and formulated with simple clarity and urgent concern for the poor, the neglected, the downtrodden, the unawakened. A fresh re-appropriation of its Wesleyan faith, rooted in his "quadrilateral" authority of Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason, and expressed in re-thought "folk theology" (again, Outler) for fellowship and mission in our time, might yet save United Methodism from turning pluralism into polarity, liberalism into vacuity, orthodoxy into obscurantism, churchmanship into power struggles, and indeed theological scholarship into irresponsible ease in academic Zion. As Gordon Rupp said, "The John Wesley we much need to hear today is the author of the 'Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.'"

But a thorough study of Wesley today requires much more of his literary legacy than is generally available, and in definitive text with critical commentary relating it to history and context. There has never been a comprehensive critical edition of his works. As Professor Baker and others remind us, Wesley's own first edition of his collected *Works* (1771-74) in thirty-two small volumes lacked his later writings, included edited matter of others, was error-ridden with careless printing and hurried editing, and is now a rare item available to few in treasured archives. Joseph Benson's second edition (1809-13) in seventeen larger volumes was more inclusive and discriminating, and well indexed, but still incomplete, uncritical, and now rare. The third ("standard") edition by Thomas Jackson (1829-31) in fourteen volumes, later augmented, often reprinted, was likewise incomplete, lacking in critical annotation and interpretation, and now is also out of print. The same is true of John Emory's first American edition of seven volumes (1831), based on Jackson's. Nehemiah Curnock supplied copious supplementary material and interpretation in his eight-volume edition of John Wesley's *Journals* (1909-16), as did John Telford in eight volumes of *Letters* (1931), but Dr. Baker has seven hundred additional letters to add, with further introduction and annotation. Moreover, even in reprint these volumes are hard to come by; and so are Edward H. Sugden's annotated two volumes of the doctrinally essential *Standard Sermons* (1921), which included just over a third of Wesley's printed sermons. Even the standard *Explanatory*

Notes upon the New Testament (1755, often reprinted) will require a new edition with critical introduction and contemporary annotation.

The Oxford Edition of John Wesley's Works undertakes to provide the wanted comprehensive and critical edition. The present Volume II embodying *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters* is an especially appropriate "earnest" of things to come. It not only offers Wesley's exposition and defense of his essential teachings, in clarifying context of controversy over doctrines and methods; it also exemplifies the superlative textual work, introductions and interpretations, indexing, and book production to be expected in forthcoming volumes. A major task of the textual editor and his editorial colleagues was the identification of a myriad scriptural, classical, and contemporary literary quotations and references, many of which Wesley had left without documentation: especially the innumerable indirect quotations, paraphrases, and allusions flowing almost unconsciously in his Bible-saturated thought and language. Some of the theological references take on special importance for their implications as to Wesley's affinities and influences. Other references to ancient or current writers would be obscure to most of today's readers unless interpreted or identified. Much of this work for this volume and others to come was Frank Baker's. His main task, however, is evident in his modest but awe-evoking Appendix, which should settle any question as to whether a meticulously collated critical edition of the text itself were a prime desideratum. Here are exhibited the processes and outcomes of his textual reconstruction, with a stemma showing relationships of original and subsequent editions of each document; an explanation of the derivation of a definitive text from these various editions amid a plethora of errors, variations, and revisions; and an exhaustive list of "all plausible variant readings noted which involve the omission, addition, or alteration of any word . . . with the editions in which they occur" (p. 543); and with a helpful orthographic explanation of treatment of Wesley's (and his printers') typography, spelling, abbreviations, capitalizations, italics, quotations, ellipses, punctuations, citations, paragraphing, headlines, etc. It is no wonder that the unit editor for this volume acknowledged in his Preface his great debt to Frank Baker: "His wide familiarity with everything connected with Wesley's life and his minute knowledge of the text of Wesley's works have made his help invaluable at every point. It is obvious that he knows a great deal more about the text than anyone since Wesley; indeed, he probably knows more about many aspects of it than did Wesley himself." The people who gave us not only John Wesley but Sherlock Holmes have also given us Frank Baker!

If the need for such a definitive critical text is now demonstrated in its accomplishment, the further need for scholarly introduction and interpretation is surely enforced by its lack earlier and provision now in the work of the unit editor, Dr. Gerald R. Cragg. This distinguished Brown Professor (now Emeritus) of Ecclesiastical History, Andover Newton Theological School, a member of the United Church of Canada and graduate of Toronto, Cambridge, and McGill Universities, and perhaps the only editor from outside the fold of Methodism and its schools, was a felicitous choice to build upon Dr. Baker's textual foundations and present the Wesley of these particular documents, in what turned out to be the introductory volume of the series. His range and expertise are established through such notable studies of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English church history and theology as *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, 1950), *Puritanism in the Period of the Great Persecution* (Cambridge, 1957), *The Church and the Age of Reason* (Penguin, 1960), *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1964), *The Cambridge Platonists* (Oxford, 1968), and *Freedom and Authority in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Westminster, 1975).

It would be difficult to think of a scholar better prepared to interpret Wesley's message and movement in terms of his theological derivations and distinctive positions, and in relation to the issues, dynamics, and literature of contemporary religious controversies. Professor Cragg's contribution is in fact substantial and richly illuminating: almost seventy pages, half devoted to general introduction and the remainder to brief introductions to the several documents in terms of occasions, personages, issues, exchanges, and significance. In addition there are copious footnotes identifying references, historical contexts, and principals in the ecclesiastical scene. Readers having access to these Wesley publications only in older collections like Jackson's, lacking such annotation, suffer unrealized impoverishment of understanding in missing Dr. Cragg's informative introductions and critical comments. These range from interpretations of Wesley as a person and a thinker, through such issues as the meanings of faith, justification, new birth, sanctification; the relation of faith and works, the accusations of antinomianism and "enthusiasm," to the methods of Wesley's movement, the writings, positions, and character of his opponents, and the style of controversial argument in that time.

To summarize the Wesley publications gathered in this volume, or even the editor's analytical summaries and contents, would be gratuitous and unduly protracting. Something of their content and function has already been adumbrated. It is important, however, to distinguish them further from the main bulk of Wesley's writings which served primarily for nurture and instruction of his followers and fellow-travelers in the evangelical revival. Here we have Wesley for outsiders, critics, opponents, and therefore more in apologia and defense; and while still characteristically clear and unaffected of thought and language, yet more the Oxford don at home in the classics and the languages, in logic and debate, in fine points of doctrinal history and Biblical argument. The *Earnest Appeal* (1743)—better known today than the other documents through Outler's excellent volume of *John Wesley* (Oxford, 1964) and Bishop Herbert Welch's older *Selections* (Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1918, revised 1942)—is, to be sure, widely general in address ("to Men of Reason and Religion"), and a winsome, luminous, edifying presentation of the faith and methods of the movement designed to correct misunderstandings and win sympathetic response. Its much longer sequel, *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (in three parts, 1745-46), is more argumentative, responding to particular critics, and not only vigorously defending his doctrines (as truly Anglican and Biblical), his manner of teaching (as appropriate and lawful), and the effects of the revival (as grossly misinterpreted), but also mounting the offensive in counter-criticism of the irreligion of certain opponents, the parlous state of religion in the nation, and the failure of the various churches to be true to their faith and calling; in contrast the development of the Wesleyan movement is exhibited for its faithfulness, relevance, and effectiveness.

Wesley could be forthright yet respectful, as in *A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London* (1747; Bishop Edmund Gibson was a distinguished though unfair critic), and *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Horne: Occasioned by his late Sermon Preached before the University of Oxford* (1761; George Horne was earnestly concerned over apparent antinomianism in Wesley's view of justification by faith); both men were eminent, able, and presumed open to correction of prejudice and misconception; and both were honored by still noteworthy replies. But Wesley could be severely if tediously counter-critical in dealing with abusive detractors such as Bishop George Lavington of Exeter and Bishop William Warburton of Gloucester; witness Wesley's worrying out of argument with the former in *A Letter to the Author of The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd* (1750), *A Second Letter* (1751) to the same, prefaced by "A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Exeter"

exposing his supposed anonymity of authorship, and finally *A Second Letter to the Lord Bishop of Exeter* (1752). Wesley dealt Warburton similar polemical justice in *A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester. Occasioned by his Tract, on the Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit* (1763). Lest readers weary with well doing neglect these lengthy disputations, they should be promised not only gems such as the closing section of that last essay, printed elsewhere as "A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity," but also rich ore of historical information and radiant deposits of faith and practice throughout the volume. Through it all pulses Wesley's magnificent obsession with the grace of God in Jesus Christ and all creation, especially in the present activity of the Spirit in the whole order of salvation.

For this volume and the entire editing and publishing project, congratulations and appreciation are due the General Editors, Bishop William R. Cannon of Atlanta, Professor Cushman of Duke, Dr. Rupert E. Davies of Bristol (former Principal and theological professor of Wesley College and former President of the British Methodist Conference), and his illustrious English Methodist predecessor, Dr. Eric W. Baker; the Board of Directors, chaired by Dean Joseph D. Quillian of Perkins School of Theology, and including Dean Thomas A. Langford of Duke; the Editorial Board, including all the preceding and Professor Richard P. Heitzenrater of Centre College (Duke A.B., B.D., Ph.D.), Professor John Lawson of Candler School of Theology, Dr. Gerald O. McCulloh of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Nashville, and Dr. Philip S. Watson of Surrey, England, Professor Emeritus of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; Mr. John A. Vickers, who is responsible for the extensive indexes of this volume and for the final volume of *Miscellanea and General Index*; several ecclesiastical, academic, and financial sponsors of the project; and finally, the officers and technical experts of the Clarendon Press, Oxford University, for producing a fittingly handsome, substantial, almost flawless volume and promising more. We may happily anticipate the next volumes forthcoming, which may be Wesley's Sermons, edited by Professor Albert C. Outler.

If there is to be one negative note, it is about the high cost, fully justifiable by expenses but discouraging to scholars and clergy who might want to begin this new collection of Wesley's Works. All we can do is to suggest a network of hinting services to alert spouses and congregations wondering what to give their ministers for Christmas and special occasions!

McMurry S. Richey

The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine. W. D. Davies. University of California Press. 1974. 521 pp. \$15.

(This review was translated from the German by Professor Frederick Herzog.)

It is not easy for a systematic theologian to review the book of a New Testament scholar. It is equally difficult to fuse the recent interest in the Jewish/Christian dialogue with a purely historical interest in the ideas of primitive Christianity. But what would be the point of New Testament specialists researching the history of primitive Christianity if amateur systematicians would not use the results? What is more, how can the Jewish/Christian dialogue be advanced fruitfully today unless Christians time and again "return" to their origins in Israel?

Whenever Christians return to their historical origins in Israel, they encounter there not only the so-called "Old Testament monotheism"—as Christian theologians falsely labeled the Jewish concept of God—but also the history of the people of Israel from which came Jesus. They encounter not only the people of Israel, but also the land—"Erez Israel."

There was a period of Christian theology when one separated God from his people in order to take over Israel's concept of God while rejecting Israel as

God's people. This form of Christian exploitation of Israel dominated liberal theology in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately the same thing still happens. There followed a time of the discovery of the indivisible partnership between God and people in the Old Testament, as one realized the fundamental significance of the covenant. As a result, Christian "Theology of the Old Testament" researched and depicted the traditions of Israel. Strangely enough the question of the theological significance of the "Erez Israel" was rarely explicated. Christian theology acknowledged God and the people of Israel, but still made a division between the people of God and the land of God. The practical implications of this limited acknowledgment of Israel as a people are obvious: Christianity acknowledges Israel as people of a religion, but not as people of a state in a particular "land." And yet according to all Jewish sources known to us, God, the people, and the land belong together in an indivisible unity. Only when this unity is acknowledged have we overcome the latent anti-Judaism of Christianity.

Since the founding of the state of Israel (1948) the issue of the land is at the center of the Jewish/Christian dialogue. After nearly 2000 years Jewish existence can again be lived in the Jewish land. For the first time Christians encounter no longer only Jews in the diaspora, but citizens of Israel. That's a novum. Therefore the theme, "The Gospel and the Land," is all the more important. We cannot be grateful enough to W. D. Davies for spending time and effort over many years in the exploration of this theme climaxing in the present publication. For a long time it will be the standard work for the theme of "Erez Israel," although the author in typical British understatement calls it "strictly a prolegomenon."

The book is structured in a very clear way. Part I offers the theology of the land in "Israelite Religion and Judaism." Part II treats "The Land of the New Testament." Four appendices conclude the work. Old Testament scholars will be especially interested in Chapter IV, "The Land in Extrabiblical Sources," in which apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, Qumran, and rabbinical sources—materials otherwise often little accessible—are examined. In the New Testament part, I was especially fascinated by Chapter VII, "The Land in the Pauline Epistles."

W. D. Davies offers his summary in "XII. Conclusion." Since pp. 366-376 are the theologically most important, I refer especially to these pages. Already in the New Testament the author discovers four different Christian attitudes toward "Erez Israel": (1) Rejection, (2) Spiritualization, (3) Historical Concern, (4) Sacramental Concentration. The historian keeps his own judgment wisely to himself. But it becomes apparent in two quotes: "The New Testament finds holy space wherever Christ is or has been: it personalized 'holy space' in Christ, who, as a figure of history, is rooted in the Land" (p. 367); and, "In sum, for the holiness of place, Christianity has fundamentally, though not consistently, substituted the holiness of the Person: it has Christified holy place" (p. 368). These sentences might sound ambiguous. But if one sees how carefully W. D. Davies distinguishes historically between Jewish, Jewish Christian, and Gentile Christian utterances about "Erez Israel," these sentences do appear as the best of all possible statements a "Gentile Christian" can make about the land.

For Jewish existence "Erez Israel" belongs to the covenant, the promise, and the Torah of God. For Jewish Christian existence "Erez Israel" belongs to the redemptive rule of the Messiah Jesus. The land is liberated in the coming of the Messianic age. But what can "Erez Israel" come to mean for a Gentile Christian? Is it only a historical recollection of the land in which Jesus lived? Or a symbol for the heavenly kingdom? Or a limited anticipation of the "new earth"?

If a Gentile Christian has access to the promissory history of Israel only through the mercy of God manifest in Christ, his or her attitude toward the

land cannot be identical with the Jewish outlook or vice versa. As Christ (Rom. 15:8ff.) appears different to a Jew than to a Gentile, so will "Erez Israel." In this sense, I believe, W. D. Davies has found a good formulation when he says: "The New Testament has personalized holy space in Christ, it has Christified holy space." For a Gentile Christian "the land" is accessible only *en Christo*. Once that has been said, one has to take a further step and recognize the universal character of Christ: Jesus Christ is not a "private person," but the eschatological person of God, or as later trinitarian doctrine has it: the God-person. Which means, in and through the person of Christ the wide realm of God's rule is opened up. In it land and space are sanctified, also "Erez Israel." The "Holy Land" is "Christified" justifiably for the Gentile Christian, if Christ and his rule are understood and "universalized" eschatologically. In the Old Testament the land first was a "promised land." Having been acquired by Israel, it also turned into a "promising" land.

Precisely in the fulfillment of the promise the land pointed beyond its borders toward that future in which *all* lands (the whole earth) will be full of the glory of God (Is.6:3). Of this future of universal glory Christians believe that it already has begun in the death and resurrection of Christ while at the same time they remember the universal promise of the "Erez Israel." As the new creation will be without a temple, since it is holy through and through, the new earth will also no longer know of a particular land of Israel. Until then "Erez Israel" is and remains also for the Christians "God's land."

Jürgen Moltmann

Professor of Systematic Theology
Tübingen University

Pauline Parallels. Fred O. Francis and J. Paul Sampley. Philadelphia and Missoula, Montana: Fortress and Scholars Press, 1975. 388 pp. \$10.95.

As the authors themselves describe it, "the text of the *Pauline Parallels* is composed of a sequential presentation of each of the ten chief letters attributed to Paul . . . in their canonical order, each in its . . . entirety: that is, Romans is followed through to its end, then I Corinthians . . . , then 2 Corinthians and so forth. . . ." (p. 1). There are ten columns on each folio (pair of facing pages) in which the main text and the relevant or parallel passages from the other nine Pauline letters are displayed. The main text, printed in its entirety, is set off by vertical boldface lines on either side. Each letter maintains its relative position among the ten columns throughout the parallels. Thus Romans is always found in column one, I Corinthians in column two, Philemon in column ten, etc. The texts paralleled are divided into sense-units, as in synoptic parallels. In each

sense-unit there are the primary parallels, arranged as we have just indicated, and a set of secondary parallels printed underneath in parallel columns and representing (from left to right on each folio) the pastorals and Acts (and occasionally other NT documents), more remote Pauline texts, and the Old Testament. The primary parallels have been chosen on the basis of (1) similarity of language, (2) similarity of images, or (3) similarity of letter structure or form.

This is a potentially valuable tool, reflecting the industry and ingenuity of the editors. It manifests, however, some problems and potential pitfalls for the unwary or unschooled user, which are obvious enough and actually intrinsic to the material itself. Certainly it is useful to have displayed in parallel columns Pauline greetings, thanksgiving, and benedictions, as well as characteristic *topoi* of Pauline theology and ethics (e.g., 1 Cor. 12:4-11 and Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:1-16). Moreover, to have arranged in parallel columns such data as Paul's references to his anticipated third visit to Co-

rinth will be a great aid even to experienced teachers and scholars. More dubious or problematic is the arrangement of parallel passages where the relation among texts is not so immediately obvious. Thus one is somewhat surprised to find 2 Cor. 10:1-6 and Phil. 1:12-18 paralleled with Rom. 1:16f. Having committed themselves to produce a complete set of Pauline parallels, the editors inevitably produce some parallels that appear remote or forced. This is not to say that the undertaking is not worthwhile, only that the result must be viewed and used with some caution, as the editors themselves warn (p. 2).

D. Moody Smith

The Radical Imperative: from Theology to Social Ethics. John C. Bennett. Westminster, 1975. 208 pp. \$4.50, paper.

At first glance the title of this book, *The Radical Imperative*, would not seem suitable for the mind and style of John Bennett, known among ethicists, theologians, and in ecumenical conferences the world over as balanced, quiet, low-keyed, irenic, temperate. Certainly not a "flaming" radical. But a careful reading of its 200 tightly-reasoned pages would confirm the aptness of the title, as well as verify the author's reputation as the most eminent Protestant ethicist in America today, as contemporary as he is wise.

Robert Frost once said, "I was never a liberal when young for fear of becoming conservative when old." John Bennett would belie that salty comment. Throughout his long career as ecumenical statesman, administrator, teacher, and scholar, he has spoken with consistent integrity the prophetic word, the radical implications for social policy of Christian ethical norms. Interestingly, he comments in his preface that "the spirit of this book is closer to that of my first book, *Social Salvation*, published forty years ago, than to many things I have writ-

ten during the intervening years." (p. 10)

Bennett takes a careful measure of the many ethical currents and movements that have transpired during these years. His normative theological standpoint is Biblical and Christocentric, but it is the prophetic Christ, the "Christ of the comma" (between "born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate") who is the paradigm and norm. He repudiates any sort of Biblical legalism, but characteristically distances his position carefully from "situation" ethics, if that is taken to mean the anomic ethics of on-the-spot improvisation. But also the Christian historic tradition of the past, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, provide guidelines for contemporary ecumenical ethical thinking. Vatican II of the Roman Church and the major conferences of the WCC, in which the author played a crucial role, reached a remarkable degree of consensus and a perspective transcendent of the parochial confinement of nation, class, or ecclesiastical tradition. And this is one of the most encouraging things he finds in contemporary Christian ethical thought, discouraging as it is, to be sure, to find the local churches so oblivious of and resistant to ecumenical ethical standards.

This reader is especially grateful for Bennett's analysis of the theologies of liberation. The author acknowledges in contrition his myopia of a WASP and male outlook now so sharply challenged by Women's Lib, by Black Power advocates, and such Latin American proponents of revolution against American capitalistic imperialism as Gustavo Gutierrez. He rightly describes James Cone, leading black spokesman for Black Theology, as a "strategic" theologian, in that Cone concentrates on one aspect of Christian ethics neglected by the dominant white establishment. Cone has to shout to be heard, but his shout is distortive of the truth. The corrective word of a Cone is needed, but this reader shares with the author a pro-

test that Cone in effect puts up a sign on the gate leading to Christian liberation: Black Only.

The strong influence of the Social Gospel is apparent through these pages. Bennett's critique of capitalism is as biting as was that of Rauschenbusch, though his suggested prescriptions are much less romantic. But though in the twenties and thirties Bennett was a socialist in economic theory, he did not then or does not now adopt any form of Marxism as the Christian's inevitable alternative to free enterprise capitalism. While he appropriates the Marxist's doctrine of ideology: that a person's religion is colored by his economic class position, his own stance also refutes such a simplistic reduction, since the Christian imperative Bennett calls for is a radical restructuring of the economic order, "taming of private economic empires," etc.

Although he is by no means an absolute pacifist, Bennett was one of the first leaders in American churches to protest the morality of the Indo-China war. From that tragic episode, as he recounts the deepening American complicity, one major lesson he feels we must learn is that "the United States should not use its power to keep other nations from having their own revolutions" (p. 179). On one minor matter he seems to waver: his realism leads him to "admit that in an armed world unilateral disarmament would be both politically non-viable and wrong." Yet in the very next sentence, "unilateral initiatives in disarmament should be tried" (p. 161), and later, "adventurous initiatives to reduce armaments even unilaterally are essential" (p. 184).

What is remarkable about Bennett's whole-long fulfilled vocation as spokesman for Christian justice and compelling about this book is that even when he has taken a long hard look at all the perils that confront civilization, and the ubiquity of human sin, he can still affirm, in confidence, that "we may live in a world with hope for future embodiments in his-

tory of justice and reconciliation" (p. 200). Such seasoned optimism can only come from a profound faith in Providence.

Waldo Beach

We Can Have Better Marriages, If We Really Want Them, David and Vera Mace. Abingdon. 1974. 172 pp. \$5.95.

This is a passionate book, not a particularly scholarly book. The Maces are advocating a cause out of their feelings, experiences and supporting data. The cause is marriage and the goal is enrichment of all of our marital relationships so that they may become companionable ones. They agree that marriage as a caste-like social institution is probably going to die in the future and believe that is all right. On the other hand, they feel strongly that companionship is a deeply meaningful and valuable way of being married, and they are about the business of affirming companionship through the process of "marriage enrichment" and its organization they have founded which is called the "Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment" (ACME).

Out of their long careers as clinical and educational leaders, they state, and I agree, that companionship and an enriched relationship probably do not just "happen." We must look after, nourish and confront our married life and the one to whom we are married. That doesn't guarantee that any relationship can become enriched but it does increase significantly the likelihood that it will become so.

Further, couples have to interact with others in order to grow and change, say the Maces. Seldom can it be done alone or simply between the couple. Individuals and couples have a great propensity to stay as they are. Someone else needs to enter the system, either by means of marriage therapy or marriage enrichment.

Marriage enrichment is different from marriage therapy, although both are potent. Marriage enrichment, as

the Maces recommend, is done with groups of married couples, led by a married couple, and is for a specified, short but intense period of time, such as five to ten hours per day for a weekend. Marital relationships that are basically not being affirmed by the partners are excluded from marriage enrichment, as are those in which there is evidence of serious personal and relational difficulties.

Marriage therapy, on the other hand, is for longer periods of duration, with less intensity, dealing with all kinds of personal and marital distress, and using individual, conjoint and group processes.

This is an exciting book because hope flows within it. Most relationships with people, including relationships with those to whom we are married, get depressed and stale. The Maces wish to encourage people to let go of their sense of guilt and "status quo" about their marriages, and get on with making the relationship what it might become, i.e. "companionship."

Marriage and family is at the core of life, yet it is also so very ordinary at times. Some people find it difficult to accept that ordinariness, and as someone said, would rather be caught nude than considered ordinary! Yet the ordinariness of marriage ought not be allowed to become an excuse for our inability to live closely and interactingly with those to whom we would be companions. Many of us still believe that marriage can be companionship—vital, nourishing, challenging, angering, and growth-producing. To those who still yearn intensely for that kind of relationship, the Maces are speaking. If you are companions-in-the-process-of-becoming, perhaps you will join in!

John C. Detwiler

To Die With Style. Marjorie Casebier McCoy. Abingdon. 1974. 175 pp. \$5.95.

In her concluding chapter, Ms. McCoy says: "So it goes . . . living and dying, each affecting the other . . . it

would seem that the achievement of death is not really distinguishable from the achievement of life. *It is in the interaction of the two that we discover our selves.*" (My emphasis.)

This book is really about self-discovery; it is against the backdrop of death that Ms. McCoy explores a variety of styles of being/becoming a self. And I think it is fair to say that she is convinced that the reality of death begs the question of the meaning of life.

I was offended by the title and the introductory section: it had a kind of death - is-only-a-part-of-life-and-shouldn't-be-feared tone. But, as I came to understand the author's intention, I came to appreciate that this book is what somebody described as "bibliotherapy." Using a variety of rich resources—from "Peanuts" to Shakespeare; from some of her own experiences with death to the experiences of famous people—she explores a variety of life-styles (and, therefore, death-styles).

I especially liked the mid-section, which deals with several specific life-styles; but the 'review' questions at the end of each chapter bothered me. A good book ought to be a dialogue between writer and reader anyhow, so why the questions? (Although discussion groups might appreciate them.)

The topic of death seems to be losing some of its "taboo" quality. My overall assessment is that Ms. McCoy has written a sensitive and helpful book which probes richly and imaginatively into the question: "what judgment does death make on my identity and on the integrity of my life?"

It is not a scholarly tome, but it is one which a good pastor might well want to suggest to (or use with) his/her parishioners as a way of taking seriously the kinds of questions death poses to the meaning of our lives.

Peter Keese

